



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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90235

HOUSE OF BISHOPS ADMONISHES SPONG; MOVES SEXUALITY TO TOP OF CHURCH'S AGENDA

by James Solheim

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 20--At its annual meeting here, the bishops of the Episcopal Church admonished a colleague for ordaining an open homosexual, and moved sexuality "to the front burner," in the words of Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning.

Halfway through its week-long meeting, September 14-20, the House of Bishops considered a resolution from Bishop William Wantland of Eau Claire (Wisconsin). The resolution called on the House to "disassociate" itself from the ordination nine months ago of an open homosexual priest by Bishop John Spong of Newark.

After nearly two hours of debate, the bishops voted 80 to 76 to "affirm and support" a February 20 statement by the presiding bishop and his Council of Advice underscoring the church's position that it is "inappropriate" to ordain practicing gay and lesbian persons. The statement also said that "good order is not served when bishops, dioceses or parishes act unilaterally."

In the wake of the ordination last December, many of Spong's colleagues severely criticized him for breaking the collegiality of the House, ignoring the clear mind of the church against such ordinations, and for ignoring what many perceive as scriptural mandates on homosexuality.

The anger over what some bishops perceived as Spong's "breach of discipline" that could have "tragic, even catastrophic" consequences was expressed by Bishop William Sheridan, retired bishop of Northern Indiana. "If we do not take definite action today, we will engender ridicule throughout this country."

Bishop Clarence Pope of Ft. Worth (Texas), president of the Episcopal Synod of America, formed by traditionalists who oppose what they perceive as liberal trends in the church, supported the resolution "with great sadness." He said the resolution was needed to protect the church's teachings.

Bishop William Burrill of Rochester (New York) argued that "the price of Anglican freedom is a bit of untidiness." He said that the action would put Spong "on the outside. We are a church of diversity," and that diversity is more important than order.

Several members of the Council of Advice who signed the February statement backed away from it during debate. Bishop Arthur Walmsley of Connecticut said that adopting the statement now "would be a token of our division, not of our leadership."

Spong chides his colleagues for inconsistency and hypocrisy

In an electrifying speech after the vote condemning his action, Spong chided his colleagues for what he perceived as their inconsistency and hypocrisy. Spong argued that, unlike traditionalists, given latitude in

opposing the church's decision to ordain women, he was threatened with trial and censure.

"I wonder if this House can embrace the fact that other bishops besides Episcopal Synod bishops have a conscience that cannot be compromised?" Spong asked. "The way the church treats its gay and lesbian members so deeply violates my conscience that it strains my life by tearing it between my loyalty to Jesus Christ, who made a habit of embracing the outcast, and my loyalty to this church, which I dearly love. Yet it is a church that historically has rejected blacks, women and gays in succession."

Spong contends that the church has been quietly ordaining practicing homosexuals for years. He said he was bothered by the lack of honesty among many of his colleagues who have "themselves knowingly ordained noncelibate homosexual persons."

The closeness of the vote meant that no one could claim a clear victory. Spong said he was pleased that the debate had been "substantive." Other bishops seemed relieved that they could return to their dioceses having distanced themselves from Spong's actions. As one bishop observed, those who came looking for a pound of flesh had to settle for a few ounces.

Traditionalists like Pope said the vote had resolved the controversy "to some degree." He and Wantland agreed that sexuality will be the dominant issue at next summer's General Convention. Wantland went so far as to suggest it may be an issue more difficult than the controversy around women's ordination.

Panel on sexuality sharpens the issues

A panel of four bishops attempted the previous afternoon to sharpen the issues, simmering in the House of Bishops for years. Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning introduced the panel by reminding the bishops that the issue of homosexuality is being discussed and debated in society and throughout the church. He said the bishops have a role to "help the church wrestle with the questions around homosexuality in the most healthy and creative way possible."

Browning admonished the bishops of all convictions to "simply accept that there are people of good faith, people who take seriously the authority of Scripture, who do not agree with you on the subject of homosexuality.

"If we can model what it is to live in the tension of disagreement, to listen to one another, to be respectful of one another, to pray for one another, then we will have turned our brokenness to God where it belongs," Browning said.

Bishop Robert Johnson of Western North Carolina spoke of his pain in dealing with the issue on a pastoral level. "I believe God calls people to ministry, and people come in all shapes, sizes, colors, genders, and sexual preferences. Yet, if we ordain practicing homosexuals in faithful relationships, would it imply that we also accept the mores of the often-promiscuous lifestyle...? Would we be advocating a lifestyle that is inconsistent with our faith heritage?" he asked.

Johnson also wondered how the church can "encourage people to be

truthful about their sexuality, on the one hand, and penalize them on the other when their truth telling sometimes offends our scriptural and spiritual sensibilities."

Bishop Frederick Borsch of Los Angeles attempted to untangle the biblical and theological questions, warning that theological reflection can provide directions but "not answer all our questions." He added that "it is an essential theological understanding that human beings need not live only according to nature, but with grace, freedom and responsibility....This is what enables us and our sexuality to be fully human."

Using the Jungian precept of "shadow," Bishop Harold Hopkins, director of the Office of Pastoral Development, invited the bishops to put aside their well-staked-out positions and look into their own vulnerabilities. He argued that people often struggle with the hidden part of themselves that they don't like, leading them to strike with contempt or judgment against others.

As they broke into small groups, there was some grumbling that the bishops had not been sufficiently prepared for the presentations or the discussions.

Bishops issue statement on homosexuality

At its closing legislative session, the House of Bishops approved a statement on homosexuality, written by a committee headed by Bishop Richard Grein of New York.

While admitting that the issues of sexuality are marked by "diversity and confusion" and that the bishops are not of a single mind, the statement said faith does offer some answers. "It offers a journey together as we look at those questions. It offers an understanding of moral discourse and the need for theological reflection. It calls us to repentance, prayer, and discernment.

"If we model what it is to live in the tension of disagreement with all its ambiguity, to listen to one another, to be respectful to one another, to pray for one another--then we will have placed our brokenness in the hands of God where it belongs. We will have tested our experience against the traditions of Scripture, and we will have made a real contribution."

Pleading for an open dialogue, the statement said, "Do not fall victim to the common error of hearing what you think people are likely to say. Let your ears be open to concerns and convictions being shared in fresh ways by people who may be experiencing pain in personal struggles. Do not let your senses warp someone else's expression of a faithful approach to human sexuality because it does not match your own. No one needs to change his or her mind to listen with respect, courtesy and, yes, with love."

Presiding bishop defines moral leadership

Sexuality was not the only issue on the minds of the bishops. The bishops were conscious of meeting in the nation's capital, and deliberations included urgent national and international issues.

In a keynote address, California sociologist Robert Bellah said the

church must demonstrate to American society a legitimate authority and a different kind of leadership. Arguing that American society has emphasized individualism, often at the expense of the common good, he urged the bishops not to be "too intimidated by the confusions of our culture" or to "fall back too readily on our central cultural stereotypes of leadership, the manager or the therapist."

It is "an exacting discipline to try to be the church" in an individualistic culture, observed Bellah, an active Episcopal layman. Bishops must help the whole church demonstrate what a covenant community based on faith and love is like, to "hold up and affirm a vision of reality that gives witness to what, as best we can discern it, God is saying to the world today."

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning laid out his own vision for moral leadership in words meant for the House of Bishops and the nation's political leaders. His own experience with international leaders led him to conclude that "great leaders are those who understand that all choices and decisions are moral at their core."

Moral leaders understand the "interaction and interdependence of the various sectors of society," and they are also prophetic, Browning contended. "What gives me hope is that God continually calls forth, liberates, gives voice to the prophets."

The theological vision of the church as the body of Christ "calls us out of isolation, calls us into community, calls us into relationships. Our vision of being one in Christ makes us whole and forms our spiritual, as well as public, body." That vision "is the grounding of public policy--the actions, the behavior, the programs, the polity we form and advance."

Browning pointedly asked if the vision of a united world is served by "an appetite for oil" to feed our "bloated lifestyle." He asked, "What is the moral principle that guides our economic system, our trade policy, our national health policy, our energy policy? What is the moral principle that guides our attention and care of the elderly, the disabled, the refugee, the homeless, the sexually abused, the persons living with AIDS? What is the moral principle that confronts racism, imperialism, homophobia, sexism? What is the moral principle, the vision, that animates our public policy?"

A major part of the answer, Browning contended, is a vision of an interdependent world. He suggested a new motto for this new world: "The many are one," calling upon church and society to forge new relationships, and particularly to strive for a new attention to threats to the environment.

A major component of the meeting was a full day on Capitol Hill, beginning with a reception with White House staff, briefings on issues, and individual meetings with lawmakers.

The following day the bishops focused on concerns presented by its national and international affairs committee, chaired by Bishop Peter James Lee of Virginia.

While assuring members of the armed services of prayers for their safety and for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, the bishops disagreed sharply on support for U.S. policy. After some editing changes, they issued a resolution that condemned Iraqi aggression, urged "continuing prayers for

peace with justice," and commended "efforts of those searching for alternatives to war and for the construction of regional structures of security," utilizing efforts of the United Nations.

The Persian Gulf situation should not monopolize the church's attention, the House said in passing resolutions on Panama, South Africa, and Kenya.

Evangelism pastoral for Decade of Evangelism

Four intensely personal testimonies of faith served anticipated the Decade of Evangelism that will be launched during Advent. Three bishops and a spouse told their stories of joy and pain in their discovery of the Gospel.

*Bishop Orris Walker of Long Island told of his "radical encounter with the radical holiness of God" and how it eventually led to the priesthood.

*Bishop Armando Guerra-Soria of Guatemala said, "God lets us know that we have only one role to model--Jesus Christ himself, and that his presence in the life of his church is real and true."

*Lance Moody, spouse of Oklahoma's bishop, related the pain of rejection, as well as the joy of learning "to trust in a God who is always there for us."

*Bishop Edward MacBurney of Quincy (Illinois), a leading traditionalist in the church, worked with Mother Teresa in Calcutta and found the face of God in her work with lepers.

A pastoral letter issued on the final day of the meeting of the House of Bishops said that "evangelism begins with listening" and urged the church to create "a prayerful environment for listening so that persons may be honored and welcomed, affirming diversity of expression and bonding to God in truth." The statement, which will be read in parishes throughout the church, said that "in the baptismal covenant we are called to 'strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.'"

Worship undergirded the meeting

The bishops began every morning with Bible study and shared daily Eucharist, with meditations by Scottish lay theologian Elizabeth Templeton.

Using healing as her theme, Templeton drew on the ordinary events of family life to share observations on forgiveness and truthfulness. She said that we "move inside the stretching generosity of God who kindles in us such desire for openness of his kingdom that we do not know who we are, or who we shall be, till we can greet one another and the alienated world as our own cherished selves."

During a special Sunday service at the Washington National Cathedral the bishops reaffirmed their ordination vows and heard the presiding bishop's call to "love militantly," carrying out the sacred trust of the baptismal covenant.

In other significant action, the House of Bishops:

*elected Bishop James Ottley of Panama to succeed the late Bishop John Walker of Washington as vice-president of the house;

*applauded awards by the Episcopal Conference for the Deaf to Bishop David Bowman of Western New York and Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning;

*greeted special visitors Bishop Samir Kafity of Jerusalem and Bishop Richard Kraft of Pretoria (South Africa).

Warm welcome promised for Phoenix

Whether or not Arizona adopts a holiday to honor slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., Episcopalians will gather in the hot Phoenix sun for the triennial convention next July. Bishop Joseph Heistand reported to the House of Bishops that a survey showed a majority of Arizona voters favor the holiday, which is on a November referendum. He also promised the bishops and spouses "a very warm welcome."

--Based on reports by Jeffrey Penn, Michael Barwell, Ruth Nicastro, Mary Lee Simpson, Steve Weston, and Nan Ross

90236

BISHOP JAMES OTTLEY OF PANAMA ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT OF HOUSE OF BISHOPS

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 14--A Central American black bishop who has been a sharp critic of U.S. policies in the region was elected by acclamation as the new vice-president of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church.

The Rt. Rev. James H. Ottley, bishop of Panama since 1984, was elected to fill the vacancy left by the death of the Rt. Rev. John T. Walker, the late bishop of Washington and two-term vice-president of the House. Bishop Walker died last year shortly after the House of Bishops met in Philadelphia.

In remarks following his election, Ottley said in Spanish and English that he was pleased by the confidence displayed by the vote, noting that his election underscores the Episcopal Church's "worldwide mission and ministry."

The Episcopal Church is one of 28 autonomous national churches of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The Diocese of Panama is part of Province 9 of the Episcopal Church, which includes churches in Mexico, Central America, and South America.

Within the past year, Ottley has been prominent in the news, primarily when he helped negotiate the release of church workers who were seized in El Salvador, and during the American invasion in Panama, when his own home was damaged in Panama City.

Ottley was critical of the U.S. invasion of Panama, saying in a pastoral

letter that he regretted "that the changes so longed for by our people did not find a response in negotiations...and that they had to be accomplished through an armed intervention that has left great suffering and grief in the wake."

As Panama began to recover from the invasion, Ottley said, "We are starting almost from scratch--our economic and legal system, even our police force, have been destroyed." He added that, while there is general rejoicing among people and "there is a lot of hope..., there is something basically wrong with U.S. policy in Latin America."

In an interview, Ottley said of his election, "With all of the changes in the world today, especially in Eastern Europe, there is a tendency not to focus on Latin America. It is a good signal to remember that we are part of the Americas. We are close neighbors; U.S. policy has neglected that. This sends a clear signal to the church and to the government that these issues are important."

As vice-president of the House of Bishops, Ottley will preside in the absence of the presiding bishop. As president of Province 9, Ottley also will continue to serve on the presiding bishop's Council of Advice.

Reactions to Ottley's election were universally positive. Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning said Ottley's election "is a joy to me." Bishop Heath Light of Southwestern Virginia said Ottley "is a bishop of great stature. His election adds a global dimension" to the Episcopal Church and to the House of Bishops."

90237

BISHOPS OPEN DECADE OF EVANGELISM BY SHARING FAITH STORIES

by Nan Ross

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 15--The Episcopal House of Bishops embraced the Decade of Evangelism by listening to four intensely personal testimonies of faith as the bishops and their spouses opened their annual gathering.

The occasion signaled the bishops' renewed commitment to emphasizing the spreading of the Gospel story. It also showed a change in approach to that mission.

"Episcopalians have tended to look askance at people like the Baptists because of their more vocal expressions of their faith," Vincent Pettit, suffragan bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey, noted afterward.

"With Episcopalians this has been a very private thing. And in fact the Episcopal Church, while being open about sharing its liturgy, may have actually discouraged this sort of sharing."

Pettit said as a priest he has long used storytelling, but people in the pews generally have had great trouble articulating their faith.

"Actually, everybody has a story to tell," said Pettit, who believes this is merely the first step in the church's march to embrace Jesus' great commission in Matthew: "Go forth and tell the Good News throughout the world."

"This is a great beginning; the next can be determined by waiting for the Holy Spirit," Pettit said.

Before a crowd of more than 400, three bishops and one bishop's spouse took turns telling their personal stories of joy and pain in their discovery of the Gospel.

For Bishop Orris "Jay" Walker of the Diocese of Long Island, who grew up in the black Baptist Church, there was never a time when he didn't know Jesus loved him. And it was his Roman Catholic grandfather who frequently took him to his church to pray, where amid "all the lights and statues" he received his "first encounter with the radical holiness of God."

But it was an Episcopal chaplain at the University of Maryland who told him he "sounded like an Anglican" and inspired him to seek the priesthood. However, the joy of knowing "God was working something tremendous in my life" gave way to the excruciating pain of the chaplain's sudden death.

Walker questioned, "How cruel could this God be to have had my support be taken away?" Through the pain he found he was being "called by God to a ministry in the whole Christian church" and to the poor and others who are not yet part of that church.

For Bishop Armando Guerra-Soria of Guatemala, who said his story "lacked the drama" of many conversions, responding to God's call away from his Roman Catholic upbringing was "one of the most difficult things he had to accept.

"But the Lord shows us we don't find him; he lets himself be known to us," said Guerra-Soria, who spent a year attending an Episcopal Church--experiencing all but the Eucharist. One day when he finally allowed his "resistance to receiving the sacraments dissolve, all the blindfolds that had impeded me from seeing Jesus in other people were removed.

"God lets us know that we have only one role to model--Jesus Christ himself,... and that his presence in the life of his church is real and true."

Lance Moody, married to Oklahoma's Bishop Robert M. Moody, told a deeply personal story that involved the pain of rejection by family members through death and divorce, as well as the joy of learning "to trust in a God who is always there for us.

"I learned I was leaveable and therefore felt I was of little value," Moody said. Her parents divorced when she was a young child, and when she was 27 her first husband died from an aneurism. "Therefore, I believed I was leaveable, and whenever I am rejected in some way, it strikes me where I am most crippled."

Moody recounted a painful story of her attempts to be accepted by a prominent parishioner. After considerable time and frustration, she was

instructed by a friend: "Lance, don't ever give anyone that kind of power over you again. Christ died for YOU."

"It sounded so simple..." Moody said, "but through this I have learned to trust in the Lord, who loves me."

Edward MacBurney, bishop of Quincy (Illinois), one of the church's leading traditionalists and a founder of the Episcopal Synod of America, said he had always believed in God as a "personal God" and that the good news of Jesus Christ is meant for everyone.

While an English-born priest reinforced this by instructing MacBurney that "ministry meant respecting every person," an event in India confirmed it for him even further.

In 1978 while visiting with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, MacBurney asked her how she could face such incredible need.

"She told me, 'If I have one leper in front me while hundreds of thousands are destitute, I don't consider the ocean of human need. I look at the leper in front of me--one by one by one.'"

The Rev. Wayne Schwab, evangelism ministries coordinator at the Episcopal Church Center, said it is also one by one that evangelism is best expressed.

"Evangelism is about stories; the best evangelism comes with story listening....If we will listen to those who are not yet at Christ's table, they will hear they are of value."

Schwab encouraged the bishops and spouses, who then broke up into small groups, to "listen before we start sharing. Go, listen hard, and then share your own stories. Real evangelism is from the heart--before [it is from] the lips."

--Nan Ross is director of communications for the Diocese of Arizona.

90238

PRESIDING BISHOP TELLS EPISCOPAL CHURCH TO 'LOVE MILITANTLY'

by Mary Lee Simpson

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 16--While the House of Bishops joined 1,200 other worshipers at Washington National Cathedral, tourists wearing their tennis shoes and fanny packs meandered about viewing part of a dream begun 83 years ago for people of all faiths all around the world.

As the visitors continually but quietly moved along the fringes of the festive Eucharist celebration--their presence a symbol of a dream made real--Episcopalians participated in the hour-and-45-minute-long morning worship service that included words of reconciliation from their presiding bishop, a reaffirmation of their bishops' ordination vows, and a reaffirmation

of their own baptismal vows.

Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning called upon the congregation to follow the example of the late Bishop John Walker, sixth bishop of the Diocese of Washington and dean of the cathedral, "to love one another militantly."

An example of that Walker kind of love, said Browning, occurred about 12 years ago when Walker had completed a visitation to a little country parish. As he was standing at the door greeting the departing worshipers, one man came through and instead of shaking Walker's hand, looked him straight in the eye and said, "Bishop, why don't you stay with your OWN people?"

Walker responded, "I am with my OWN people."

"We could ill afford to lose a spirit like that one," said Browning. "We need it now when the souls of people are so violently separated from each other in so many different ways. That brave spirit that wages peace, just like we wage war. Militantly loving. Determined to be related."

Browning urged his audience that no matter who our "own people" are, we need to have this militant love burning in our hearts to carry out the sacred trust that comes out of our baptismal covenant.

Browning also urged his fellow Christians to quit dwelling on who starts the conflicts in our lives. Rather work to transform the conflicts so that they can give way "to the household of God in which we place our hopes."

Browning's sermon spoke to Dr. Lorenzo C. Handy, a communicant of Old St. Paul's, Baltimore, who went to Washington to hear the presiding bishop. "He made me see that I must be open to those who may not share my views," said Handy.

For 14-year-old Christopher Goodman, a Scottsdale, Arizona, resident studying at St. Albans School, Browning's message was a reinforcement of the Christian admonition to "turn the other cheek."

"His sermon stirred me to want to think more about our role as Christians," noted Dr. Elizabeth Tidball, a lay reader at the cathedral.

A highlight of the service came when the bishops stood to reaffirm their ordination vows, followed by the congregation standing to join bishops in reaffirming their baptismal covenant.

The moment came as a spiritual and renewing time for the bishops. "It was a good way to take one's spiritual temperature," said Suffragan Bishop Arthur B. Williams of Ohio. "To say those rather than hear them again was renewing."

One retired bishop reaffirmed his vows for the first time in more than 30 years. "Tears just streamed down my face," he said.

For Bishop Edward Lee, Jr., of Western Michigan, the reaffirmation--coming about 12 months after his ordination--was a time to reflect on the different areas of his vocation.

"It was a thoughtful and prayerful moment for us," said Bishop Vincent Warner of Olympia (Washington). "I took that moment very seriously."

90239

BISHOPS SHARE STORIES OF MINISTRY TO PERSONS LIVING WITH AIDS

WASHINGTON, D.C., SEPT. 17--As they have at previous House of Bishops gatherings, those involved in AIDS ministry met for breakfast to exchange their stories of education and care giving.

Bishop Douglas Theuner of New Hampshire talked about his experience at the recent international medical conference on AIDS in San Francisco, and the "flabbergasting response" he received.

"We gave away 5,000 my-church-has-AIDS pins in three days to people from all over the world," Theuner said. The Episcopal Church was the only church officially represented at the San Francisco meeting, according to him.

A Bulgarian epidemiologist told Theuner that for 40 years his church hadn't had a social ministry of any kind and that this 'was a great way for his church to come out of the closet.'"

Theuner's experience was one of several stories exchanged among the bishops and spouses who minister to persons living with AIDS.

For Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, his relationship with a person living with AIDS in Hawaii was one of advocacy and service. He advocated for his friend's colleagues who lost their jobs as a result of their co-worker having AIDS. Browning said his pastoral ministry with the family enabled the family to minister to their dying son.

Among other stories told was one about an ordained priest in the Diocese of Western North Carolina, "who looks like she could be pouring tea at the White House" and who was named a community's Woman of the Year for her ministry to persons living with AIDS.

In the Diocese of Iowa, an Episcopal deacon has single-handedly coordinated a network of AIDS educational information throughout the state.

A hospice volunteer, one of two out of 32 in her training group who was willing to minister to an AIDS patient, described how members of a small community rallied around a woman dying of AIDS.

The group agreed that the Commission on AIDS must remain strong in order to maintain the church's international leadership role in the fight against AIDS.

"Our work is a real opportunity for evangelism," said Theuner.

90240

BELLAH CHALLENGES BISHOPS TO NEW MODELS OF LEADERSHIP

by Ruth Nicastro

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 17--The Episcopal Church must demonstrate to American society a legitimate authority and a different kind of leadership, sociologist and author Robert Bellah told the House of Bishops.

Characterizing American society as having abandoned almost any acceptance of authority and rejected any leadership not based on the market economy, Bellah told the church leaders, "I hope you have the courage to be what you are as authentically as you understand what that is."

Bellah also urged them not to be "too intimidated by the confusions of our culture" and not to "fall back too readily on our central cultural stereotypes of leadership, the manager or the therapist."

Those stereotypes come out of a social philosophy that is derived from the teaching of John Locke, explained the Elliot Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley. Bellah is the author of the 1985 best seller *Habits of the Heart*, in which he delineated through several case histories how Locke's "myth"--that the ultimate good will be derived from individual self-interest--has pervaded social thinking in this country since its founding, to the detriment of an understanding of the importance of community and of the common good.

It is "an exacting discipline to try to be the church" in an individualistic culture, Bellah said. The bishop as leader must help the whole church demonstrate what a covenant community based on faith and love is like.

"If the church is to be the church," Bellah continued, "it must not only practice its beliefs within the community. It must show forth what they imply for the larger society--not to coerce acceptance and not to be swept into activism at the expense of spirituality--but to hold up and affirm a vision of reality that gives witness to what, as best we can discern it, God is saying to the world today."

Bishops have a special role to represent the authority that comes from God and belongs to the whole church--an authority that "transcends us all, the authority of ultimate reality itself," Bellah said.

An active Episcopalian layman, Bellah told the bishops, "Every sermon should point, yes, of course, to Scripture, but, yes, also to the world, and make the link between them."

Bellah explained that, in Locke's philosophy, individuals "with a little bit of property gained by the sweat of their brow" enter a social contract through which they set up a government to protect their property. The model allows "an unprecedented degree of individual freedom" and an "unprecedented limitation on the arbitrary powers of government to interfere with the individual."

The founders of the institution that is America, Bellah acknowledged,

were devoted to this concept of individual freedom, but they did not anticipate the consequences of that concept linked to an economic life that places no moral limit on the acquisition of property, that sees no obligation to society as a whole, and that eventually pervades the whole of life, not just the economy.

It is a concept that has led to unprecedented polarization of wealth and poverty, and "public evidence of widespread human misery that amazes those from other industrialized nations and reminds them of Third World countries," Bellah added.

The concept has now seeped deeply even into the family, Bellah said, so that an individual no longer belongs to a family but the family seems to be at the service of the individual--"if you don't meet my needs, I'm splitting."

Today, this individualistic heritage has brought us to the point "that there is no such thing as the common good except as the sum of individual goods; but in the complex interdependent world in which we live, the sum of our individual goods produces a common bad that eventually erodes our individual satisfactions as well."

Such individualistic emphasis carries into religion a "radically subjective and private" understanding, Bellah said, that is at variance with the traditional understanding of the church "as a community of unlimited loyalty and trust...based on a covenant relationship with the Creator."

How can such subjective Christians understand leadership, authority, or the episcopacy? Bellah asked. How can they "understand in their bones Paul's great organic metaphor of the body of Christ" where all are called, although not in the same way, and all gifts are recognized and affirmed?

As if to encourage the bishops against discouragement in attempting to stand virtually against the culture, Bellah turned to remarks made by one of them, Bishop Frederick H. Borsch of Los Angeles, at the Episcopal Church Foundation scholarship dinner last spring.

Bellah quoted Borsch that "people are hungry for fellowship to find meaning in life, and they are seeking answers. [They want churches that] have a certain liveliness about them...and [that are] involved with the real problems in our society and seeking to make a difference in their neighborhood and the lives of people."

Later Bishop Allen Bartlett of Pennsylvania seemed to speak for many others in the House of Bishops when he said he felt Bellah had given the bishops a "marvelous" challenge. "It's awesome," he said, "to think the church could have an answer and might provide direction for a world looking for that kind of leadership."

--Ruth Nicastro is missionary of communication for the Diocese of Los Angeles.

90241

BISHOPS SEEK 'HEALTHY CREATIVE WAY' TO DEAL WITH HOMOSEXUAL ISSUES

by Jeffrey Penn

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 17--The Episcopal Church must put aside rancor and judgment on the issue of homosexuality and continue listening to voices that might result in a climate of greater understanding, four bishops told the House of Bishops meeting here.

Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning pointed out that the subject of homosexuality is being discussed and debated in society and throughout the church. "Over the ages, homosexuality has not been addressed with openness and honesty," Browning said.

Browning said the bishops of the church have a role to "help the church wrestle with the questions around homosexuality in the most healthy and creative way possible."

The presiding bishop told his colleagues the subject of homosexuality would continue to be discussed by church and society. "It will not be and should not be legislated away," he said.

Yet, Browning admonished the bishops of all convictions to "simply accept that there are people of good faith, people who take seriously the authority of the Scripture, who do not agree with you on the subject of homosexuality."

Browning said faith offers "a way to live together as we look at questions. If we simply want to be the church that is in favor of this and opposed to that we will be selling a hungry society short," he said. "If we can model what it is to live in the tension of disagreement, to listen to one another, to be respectful of one another, to pray for one another, then we will have turned our brokenness to God where it belongs."

Journey seeking wholeness and holiness

The afternoon presentation touched on an issue that has been simmering in the House of Bishops for a number of years. The controversial ordination of an openly gay man by Bishop John Spong of Newark last December turned up the heat on the debate and called into question the authority of a 1979 General Convention resolution that said the ordination of self-avowed, practicing homosexuals is "inappropriate."

Bishop Robert Johnson of Western North Carolina spoke first on behalf of the panel, reminding his listeners they should recapture the spirit of the General Convention of 1988 that urged the church to share convictions and concerns with respect for each other. Johnson said that the struggle over homosexuality was a journey seeking "wholeness and holiness."

Johnson shared some of his own questions about homosexuality. "I believe God calls people to ministry, and people come in all shapes, sizes, colors, genders, and sexual preferences. Yet if we ordain practicing

homosexuals in faithful relationships, would it imply that we also accept the mores of the often promiscuous homosexual lifestyle? In other words, would we be advocating a lifestyle that is inconsistent with our faith heritage?"

Johnson told a story of a homosexual in his diocese who sought to have the blessing of a lifelong commitment and to enter the ordination process. He admitted that he felt torn between pastoral considerations for the individual and the current position of the church.

Johnson said that he told the individual, "The Episcopal Church is one of a few churches that says you're welcome, but we sometimes don't know what to do with you."

"I believe in Jesus Christ that the truth sets us all free. Yet, how can we as the church encourage people to be truthful about their sexuality on the one hand and penalize them on the other when their truth telling sometimes offends our scriptural and spiritual sensibilities?"

Bishop George Hunt of Rhode Island, chairman of the Standing Commission on Human Affairs, reminded the bishops that the commission had been listening to the broad diversity of the church and would present a report to the 1991 General Convention.

Hunt reported that only 26 of the 118 dioceses have responded to the General Convention resolution to listen to the stories of gay and lesbian members of the church.

Untangle the questions

Bishop Frederick Borsh of Los Angeles attempted to untangle biblical and theological questions that underlie many assumptions about homosexuality. At the outset, Borsch warned that theological reflection can provide directions, but "not answer all our questions. There is much in the Bible, in Jesus' teaching particularly, and in our tradition that indicates that we are not to have all our questions answered in this life."

Borsch reviewed the biblical arguments in regard to homosexuality. "What we today define and understand as homosexual orientation would probably not have been understood in the biblical era," Borsch said. He said the issue of homosexuality "reminds contemporary Christians of the distance between our world and theirs."

Borsch contended the Bible does not provide a definitive answer to the question of homosexual orientation. Yet, he said the church continues to seek understanding from the Scriptures. "Thus a basic and critical question remains for the church: How to interpret the Bible and understand its authority?"

Borsch also pointed out that arguments from natural theology can be used to condemn and to support homosexuality. Nevertheless, Borsch said, "It is an essential theological understanding that human beings need not live only according to nature, but with grace, freedom, and responsibility.... This is what enables us and our sexuality to be fully human."

Bishop Harold Hopkins, director of the presiding bishop's Office of Pastoral Development, addressed the bishops from a pastoral perspective. Hopkins invited the bishops to put aside their well-staked-out positions and

to look inside at their vulnerabilities.

Referring to the Jungian psychological precept of the "shadow," Hopkins suggested that people often struggle with the part of themselves that they don't like and strike back with contempt or judgment against others. He suggested that pride prevents people of all stripes from having compassion for those who are different. Hopkins challenged the bishops to consider the unity of the church, which is centered on "the redeeming love of Christ to that broken, wounded, desperate world for which he died."

Mixed reactions in small groups

Following the four presentations, the bishops broke into small groups for discussion. Reactions among bishops were mixed. "I think there was a general recognition that the broad-stroke presentations did not address the pointed questions we are hearing at home," said Bishop Heath Light of Southwestern Virginia.

Light said the bishops must now come to some conclusions about their leadership role in situations where there are differences of opinion. "Is the role of the bishop to teach a particular position, or to be a reconciler--one who holds the family together in spite of tension and strong differences of opinion?" he asked.

"There was some opinion that the presentations were not evenhanded or balanced," said Bishop Vincent Warner of Olympia (Washington). "We did not hear from the conservative viewpoint or from an avowed homosexual," he said.

The question for the future, said Light, is how to move forward and to both listen and speak about the subject of homosexuality in the midst of "a theology of creative chaos."

90242

PRESIDING BISHOP LAYS OUT HIS VISION FOR MORAL LEADERSHIP DURING HOUSE OF BISHOPS

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 18--The presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church laid out his own vision for moral leadership in words meant for the church's House of Bishops and the nation's political leaders.

Taking as his text the passage from Proverbs, "Where there is no vision, the people perish," the Most Rev. Edmond L. Browning said that his own experience with international leaders has led him to conclude that "great leaders are those who understand that all choices and decisions are moral at their core."

Browning added that "great leadership understands the dynamic and reforming power of interaction and interdependence of the various sectors of

society." An important role for bishops of the church is a partnership with elected political leaders, he continued, mentioning his own personal pastoral relationship with President George Bush.

The bishops will spend a full day Wednesday on Capitol Hill--breakfast at the White House, briefings with staff on pressing national issues, visits with individual members of Congress, and a reception.

Moral leadership is also prophetic, according to Browning. "What gives me hope is that, out of the dictator's bowels, God continually calls forth, liberates, and gives voice to the prophets. What the oppressor is unable to digest is the life-giving Word," he said.

In articulating his own personal moral vision, Browning said that the biblical concept that "the many are one" is the "bedrock and guide of my preaching about inclusion and compassion." The theological vision of the church as the body of Christ "calls us out of isolation, calls us into community, calls us into relationships. Our vision of being one in Christ makes us whole and forms our spiritual, as well as public, body." Browning said that such a vision "is the grounding of public policy--the actions, the behavior, the programs, the polity we form and advance."

"What is the moral principle...?"

That vision is deeply compromised by forces that divide people and push them toward "self-interest and self-service." At a time of dramatic freedom movements, especially in Eastern Europe, there is a contradictory "rise of factionalism and racism, of ethnic and tribal tension, that is frightening."

Browning asked if the vision of a united world is served by "an appetite for oil," "an unbridled Western social, cultural and political" power move, or "the self-interest of a bloated lifestyle." He said that he wonders what moral principle guides U.S. actions in the Persian Gulf, Central America, the Philippines, and the Third World.

"What is the moral principle that guides our economic system, our trade policy, our national health policy, our national education goals, our environmental policy, our energy policy?" he asked. "What is the moral principle that guides our attention and care of the elderly, the disabled, the refugee, the homeless, the sexually abused, persons living with AIDS? What is the moral principle that confronts racism, imperialism, homophobia, sexism? What is the moral principle, the vision, that animates our public policy?"

The answer, Browning said, lies in a commitment to the principle that "the many are one," sharing a common vision that transcends selfishness and individualism.

During a question-and-answer session, Browning expressed his deep concern about the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf and ministry with military personnel--but quickly added that such a high-visibility crisis diverts attention from other major issues. "How do we call these issues back to our attention?" he asked.

Browning called for support of President Bush's condemnation of the

Iraqi invasion of Kuwait but said we might have "jumped the gun" by sending in troops so quickly. He said that he hoped the U.N. role would be enhanced.

While he may find it necessary to challenge the U.S. policy, as he has in the past on issues such as El Salvador, Browning said he wants to be in partnership with the president, not in "an adversarial relationship."

--by James Solheim

90243

EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF THE DEAF PRESENTS AWARDS DURING HOUSE OF BISHOPS

by Mary Lee Simpson

WASHINGTON, D.C. Sept. 18--For the commitment of his diocese to ministry with the deaf, Bishop David Bowman of Western New York has received the Thomas Gallaudet Award from the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf (ECD).

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning also was recognized by the ECD for his efforts to include the deaf in the life of the church.

The awards were presented here today during the annual gathering of the House of Bishops.

Bowman gave credit to the late Rev. David Greenwood, a volunteer vicar who laid the foundation for the ministry of the little Church of the Ephphatha, and to the Rev. Betsy Smylie who has brought new vitality to the congregation as part-time vicar.

Smylie, who has been with the 40-member mission now for about a year, said that through the leadership of Bowman, members of the diocese agreed to provide professional interpreters for all diocesan events, the installation of a telephone for the deaf in the diocesan office, and a closed-caption decoder for use with Christian education videos.

"We have a small but diverse congregation," said Smylie

Thomas Gallaudet was an Episcopal priest whose mother and son were deaf.

90244

BISHOPS NARROWLY VOTE TO 'DISASSOCIATE' FROM HOMOSEXUAL ORDINATION IN NEWARK

by James Solheim and Jeffrey Penn

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 18--The Episcopal Church's House of Bishops meeting here erupted in an intensely emotional debate and voted by a surprisingly slim margin to "disassociate" itself from the ordination nine months ago of an avowed homosexual to the priesthood by Bishop John Spong of Newark (New Jersey).

By a vote of 80 to 76, the bishops chose to "affirm and support" a February 20 statement by the presiding bishop and his Council of Advice that affirmed the church's position that it is "inappropriate" to ordain practicing gay and lesbian persons. The resolution was submitted by Bishop William Wantland of Eau Claire (Wisconsin), a prominent traditionalist in the church.

"We regret the hurt and confusion caused for many members of the church by the ordination and by subsequent events....We believe that good order is not served when bishops, dioceses, or parishes act unilaterally," said the statement signed by bishops from the church's nine provinces.

In the wake of the ordination last December, many of Spong's colleagues severely criticized him for breaking the collegiality of the House, for ignoring the clear mind of the church against such ordinations, and for ignoring scriptural mandates.

Dozens of bishops lined up at microphones during the tense hour-and-a-half debate, and their comments were a clear indication that the issue is both complicated and very emotional. Several bishops said angrily that the people in their dioceses were looking to the House of Bishops for a clear condemnation of the ordination.

A 'breach of discipline and doctrine'

Retired Bishop William Sheridan of Northern Indiana called the resolution a "breach of discipline and doctrine" that could have "tragic, even catastrophic, consequences for the church. If we do not take definite action today, we will engender ridicule throughout this country." Bishop Alex Dickson of West Tennessee asked pointedly, "Can a bishop of this church do anything he wants to?"

One of the first at the microphone was Bishop Clarence Pope of Ft. Worth (Texas), president of the Episcopal Synod of America, a coalition of traditionalists who oppose what they perceive as liberal trends in the church. Pope said he supported the resolution "with great sadness. If we don't adopt this resolution, we go a long way in changing our religion. Much of the church's teaching will be altered if we don't take steps."

Others, like Bishop William Swing of California, saw a "punitive meanness between the lines of the statement." He asked what the House was

voting on--Spong, homosexuality, the force of General Convention resolutions, collegiality....?"

Three members of the Council of Advice who signed the statement said they would remove their names if the House passed the resolution. "I'd like to think we are moving on," said Bishop Herbert Donovan of Arkansas, secretary of the House of Bishops. "We have heard some voices that we need to listen to carefully" and, he suggested, the February 20 statement was valid for the time it was written.

Bishop Arthur Walmsley of Connecticut agreed with Donovan, arguing that adopting the statement at this time "would be a token of our division, not of our leadership."

Bishop William Frey, dean of the Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Pennsylvania, characterized the statement as a mild reprimand. "Some have said that this is a gun pointed at the head of Spong. But it's really a water pistol."

Bishop William Burrill of Rochester said, "The price of Anglican freedom is a bit of untidiness." If we take this action, Burrill argued, Spong will "be on the outside. We are a church that welcomes diversity. Order is not that important--diversity in unity is."

Bishop Gordon Charlton of Texas said that bishops were responsible for guarding the faith, discipline, and unity of the church. "If this is to have any reality, it must begin in our own house." He said the action was taken not in anger but with "great sorrow and reluctance" so that the whole world can see the unity of the church and the integrity of the House. Doing nothing was not an option, Charlton said, because "the church will be watching."

A substitute motion, which would have referred the issue to two committees, was decisively defeated.

Spong chides bishops for their hypocrisy

In a stinging, defiant half-hour response after the vote, Bishop Spong called it "an exciting afternoon" because the debate on the issue was "substantive." Yet he admonished the House for what he perceives as a continuing hypocrisy. He contrasted his treatment, for example, with that of the traditionalist bishops who, when they opposed the church's decision to ordain women, were given a great deal of latitude.

Spong argued that, unlike the traditionalists who are his severest critics, he followed the canonical process when he went ahead with the ordination. "When the cries of ecclesiastical pain went up and words like presentment, trial, and censure were spoken as threats," the church listened to angry bishops. Yet he was excluded from such meetings and never "given the opportunity to meet face-to-face" with his accusers."

"I wonder if this House can embrace the fact that other bishops besides [Episcopal] Synod of America bishops have a conscience that cannot and will not be compromised?" Spong asked. "The way the church treats its gay and lesbian members so deeply violates my conscience that it strains my life by tearing it between my loyalty to Jesus Christ, who made a habit of embracing

the outcast, and my loyalty to a church that I dearly love. But it nonetheless is a church that has historically rejected blacks, women, and gays, in succession."

"It is not the bishop of Newark who is violated by this process. It is the gay and lesbian members of this church," Spong added.

Going to the heart of a major component of the controversy--how binding General Convention resolutions are for the church--Spong said, "The day will come when every member of this House will regret any attempt we might make to give canonical weight" to those resolutions. He reminded the bishops that the 1979 resolution was a recommendation and therefore not binding.

Repeating an argument he has made in defense of the ordination, Spong said the church has been quietly ordaining practicing homosexuals for years. Noncelibate homosexuals are found at all levels of church life--not only in parishes but also the House of Bishops, on seminary faculties, and among student bodies.

Spong said that the charge that he violated the collegiality of the House is "a sign of fear, even of homophobia." Similar charges have never been leveled against members of the Episcopal Synod or others who hold views contrary to General Convention resolutions.

Spong said he was bothered by the lack of honesty among some of his critics, especially those who have "themselves knowingly ordained noncelibate homosexual persons." He related the pain surrounding his recent decision not to ordain an avowed homosexual deacon until after General Convention in Phoenix, despite support for the candidate from the parish and diocesan committees. The decision was a further indication of his attempt to be collegial, he said.

"If the standards of this church are to apply to all equally then I will abide by those standards," Spong said--but they must be mandatory and binding on all.

Spong concluded that the last year, despite all the controversy, was "the most exhilarating, growing, eventful year of my life. And the primary reason for that is that I have experienced first-hand the prejudice and the negativity and the pain and the fear that is the daily bread of gay and lesbian people. Their ability to forge relationships of durability, commitment, and faithfulness--living under that kind of hostile, negative rejection--is in my opinion, almost a miracle."

Following Spong's speech, the House adopted the resolution it had previously rejected, calling for the church to continue studying the implications of the issue of ordaining homosexuals.

90245

BISHOPS AND SPOUSES INVADE CAPITOL HILL WITH THEIR CONCERNS, FIND A MIXED RECEPTION

by Ruth Nicastro

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 20--In what one participant described as a "purple invasion," about 150 bishops and spouses spent a full day on Capitol Hill for issue briefings and dialogue with legislators.

The briefing on the Middle East, for example, was conducted by Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee who was instrumental in a move to encourage Israel to open West Bank schools closed for more than two years.

Chafee told the group--including Bishop and Mrs. Samir Kafity, president-bishop of the church in Jerusalem--that denying Palestinian children their education could have the effect of "turning an entire generation of potential peacemakers into a generation of potential war-makers."

Kafity expressed his appreciation of the Senate action that led to a reopening of the schools last January and underscored his concerns about the continuing oppression of Palestinians and the role of the United States in subsidizing the resettlement of Soviet Jews in Israel.

Bishop Mellick Belshaw of New Jersey found Congressman James Leach of Iowa "extremely engaging and helpful" in delineating Cold War issues, the subject selected by another group. "He was honest about his own position and then very helpful in getting into the dynamics of what it means to be a member of Congress dealing with a critical issue," Belshaw said.

Congressman James McDermott, a physician from Seattle, told those attending a briefing on health care issues that he was confident the United States would have a national health care system by 1995. McDermott said the issue was urgent because 37 million Americans, 30 million of them children, are now totally without any kind of protection.

Three Ohio bishops and their wives spent more than an hour with Senator John Glenn discussing a wide range of topics, from the economy and the budget to the crisis in the Persian Gulf. Glenn had just returned from a fact-finding mission to the Kuwait borders and shared with his guests the strategic concerns facing the United States and his own hopes that a diplomatic solution is still possible.

Five Virginia bishops met with their senators, Charles Robb and John Warner. Bishop Heath Light of Southwestern Virginia was particularly pleased with the discussion on Central America. Robb was scheduled to leave for El Salvador the day he met with the bishops.

Among the other briefings were one on child care led by Congressman Dale Kildee of Michigan and national volunteer service led by Congressman David McCurdy of Oklahoma. A deadline for budget negotiations prevented a few members of Congress from participating.

The day was designed by the staff of the church's Washington office. The Rev. Robert Brooks and Betty Coates lined up speakers, many of them Episcopalians, for the briefings. Several of them paid tribute to the work of the Washington office. When asked what led to his passionate concern for Palestinian children, Senator Chafee pointed to Coates and said, "It was that lady over there."

Not everything went smoothly, however. An early morning reception sponsored by the White House produced some pointed criticism for what some participants, especially the spouses, perceived to be a condescending tone and a misreading of the audience. The presiding bishop acknowledged the anger by asking, at the final session of the House of Bishops, if he should write to President Bush to express disappointment and to tell him he missed "a marvelous opportunity to engage us in dialogue." The House erupted in applause.

--Michael Barwell contributed to this article.

90246

WOMEN'S CAUCUS ANNOUNCES PLAN TO HONOR MEN WHO SUPPORT WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

by Susan Pierce

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 20--The Episcopal Women's Caucus plans to issue a "Good Guys" award during the 1991 General Convention "to raise up men who have made significant contributions in advancing the role of women in the Episcopal Church."

At the same time, the caucus representatives accepted without protest a decision by the bishops to forward a women's response to the Eames Commission Report to the House of Bishops' committee on theology for further study, rather than distribute it to the church.

The caucus met here to solidify plans for the church's 1991 General Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, and to make sure that the bishops heard the caucus's point of view on issues concerning women in the church.

At their meeting, and in conversations with bishops, caucus members spent time discussing how to implement the full participation of women in the church in conjunction with the Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women program.

The caucus already has called on the church to celebrate the inclusion of women in all orders of ministry at the Phoenix convention and asked that the impetus for this come from the presiding bishop. Plans also are in motion to send two caucus representatives to the first ordinations of women in the

Anglican Church of Australia, set for February 24, 1991.

The bishops are recommending that the Eames Commission Report, the study on women in the episcopate commissioned by the archbishop of Canterbury and authored by Anglican primates and theologian Dr. Mary Tanner, be distributed to the church at large. The caucus is offering a response to the report written by ordained women theologians.

"It's not a rebuttal to the Eames Report, just another voice," said board member the Rev. Chilton Knudsen, adding that since the Eames Report was authored almost exclusively by men, it was important to have a response from women, particularly ordained women in the United States. The response, *A Theological Response to the Archbishops' and Primates' Report*, is available from the caucus.

Caucus President Marjorie Christie said that among the scheduled activities at General Convention are a luncheon for women deputies, Triennial delegates, and bishop(s) and the new "Good Guys" awards dinner. The dinner, explained Vice-President Sally Bucklee, "is intended to raise up men who have made significant contributions in advancing the role of women in the Episcopal Church." In addition to the awards, said Bucklee, the caucus will begin a list called "The Communion of Saints," honoring deceased Episcopalians who have supported women's rights.

The caucus also distributed at the meeting *Her Daughters Shall Rise*, the story of the Women's Witnessing Community at the 1988 Lambeth Conference, written by the Rev. Jean Jersey, a U.S. priest who was at Lambeth. The book was funded jointly by the caucus and by the Office of Women in Mission and Ministry at the Episcopal Church Center. Single copies are available at no charge from Parish Supply at the Church Center, 1-800-223-2337. For bulk orders, a donation is requested to assist women from developing countries to attend the 1992 Anglican Encounter in Brazil.

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--Susan Pierce is managing editor of The Witness.

90247

DON'T BE SHY ABOUT YOUR GIFTS FOR MINISTRY VERNA DOZIER TELLS BISHOPS' SPOUSES

by Nan Ross

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 20--Noted teacher and Episcopalian lay leader Verna Dozier told spouses of bishops we need to rethink modesty as a Christian virtue and stop being shy about our individual gifts for ministry.

"We are either shy about our gifts, or we want to have the gifts someone else has, and [the result is] we don't pay attention to our own," said

Dozier. "Your gift is something your community has affirmed--something other people say you do well."

Dozier cautioned the group members to be aware of the tendency to disregard compliments that are paid about the things they do. "We think this so-called modesty is a gracious response, but it's not.

"Your gift is something you enjoy, something you do well, something that others have affirmed and the world needs. These four things will help you identify your gift."

Dozier, a native of Washington, D.C., addressed the special gathering of bishops' spouses as a dear friend and as a respected Bible scholar and teacher of public school students and seminarians. And her grandmotherly wisdom was applied when the women broke into small groups to discuss their ministry gifts.

Variety is at the heart of the world God created, yet we insist in so many areas of our lives that only one way is right, Dozier said.

"I have a lot of trouble with the interpretation of the story involving Mary and Martha. So often we interpret in that passage that Mary has chosen the right way, that of quietness and stillness. We say that Martha with her energy, order, and criticism was wrong and that Jesus was telling Martha to be like Mary.

"I do not for one minute buy that," Dozier said. "I think that Jesus was telling Martha to affirm Mary. The one thing that he was telling Martha was that he valued Mary's gift. Mary was doing something that other women were not doing, and she valued herself.

"I think Jesus put his arm around a harried Martha and told her to value her sister's gift."

Dozier, author of *The Authority of the Laity*, considered one of the church's handbooks on lay ministry, said *service* is our word for ministry to the world. "This is the ministry that transforms the world, and to that we are called."

Dozier encouraged the gathering to "take some time to affirm the gifts of others....Take time to reflect on what the world needs and how your gift might meet those needs."

--Nan Ross is director of communications for the Diocese of Arizona.

90248

SCOTTISH THEOLOGIAN'S MEDITATIONS TAKE BISHOPS ON FIVE-DAY WELLNESS TRIP

by Mary Lee B. Simpson

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 20--A 45-year-old Scottish Presbyterian mother of three, who describes herself as "a licensed question asker" and the Anglican Communion as a "duck-billed platypus," charmed and challenged bishops with her daily meditations on healing during the House of Bishops meeting.

Elizabeth Templeton, a theologian familiar to many of the bishops for the daily meditations she offered during the Lambeth Conference of the world's Anglican bishops, took the clergy on a five-day wellness trip through the worlds of history, nature, the cosmos, ministry, and self. With a kind of magpie temperament and childlike imagination, she connected the bishops' busy lives with past and present theology through Bible readings and prayers.

Templeton said she hates the staleness of theology and thrives on the untidy questions that surface in the theological questions she finds in newspapers, novels, and plays--not necessarily sermons and doctrine.

The groundwork for this theologian's meditations during Eucharist, done on a mother's daily jog, comes from ordinary things like what her children say and do.

"Children have a kind of truthfulness that theology needs and that most of us adults don't accept," said Templeton. Her perspective as a parent surfaced in these meditations.

"I think being a parent has taught me more about forgiveness than I knew before," Templeton told the bishops during a meditation on the healing of history. "The amazing thing about the forgiveness of small children is that they don't choose to do it. They do it like breathing, like the Samaritan finding the wounded Jew and simply seeing that it is obvious that he needed to be picked up," she said. "They do it like breathing. "There's no self-conscious magnanimity about it."

In her meditation on the healing of nature, Templeton wondered aloud about the burden the next generation will bear as self-conscious protectors of nature. "As our 11-year-old steers me round the supermarket, firmly vetoing products made with animal fat, or damaging rain forests, I sometimes wonder, 'Are these children going to be capable of having orgies of consumption?'"

With a sense of mischief, Templeton challenged the bishops to work at healing the church by looking at all of life, and she urged them to be more open to all that is going on around them. "Things won't be mended just by looking at ourselves," she said during an interview.

Templeton has been questioning all her life. As a teenager when she went through "that awful evangelical thing where you weren't a Christian if you didn't say the right stuff," she recalled her father treating her with great

gentleness and Christian nurture.

As a young adult Templeton found she couldn't hold on to her belief in God. "I asked, 'Will this be something I shed?' I wanted to tackle it hard, to give theology the benefit of the doubt before I gave it up," she said.

That collapse led Templeton into a study of theology at New College, Edinburgh. She stopped short of ordination because she couldn't sign the church's confession of faith.

Gradually, and with the help of a Greek Orthodox colleague at Edinburgh University where she taught religion, Templeton became aware of Sartre's concept that "what's not there is more important than what's there."

It would be facile and a little cozy to seal these meditations with a fairy-tale "and-they-all-lived-happily-ever-after" ending, Templeton said on the final day of the meeting. "But it is clear to me from the experience of these few days...that we move inside the stretching generosity of God who kindles in us such desire for the openness of his kingdom that we do not know who we are, or who we shall be till we can greet one another, and the alienated world as our own cherished selves."

At the end of the series, one admirer told Templeton, "You tied up those meditations so neatly."

"Oh, I do hope not," replied the woman who loves questions. "I'm much too untidy for that."

--Mary Lee Simpson is editor of The Southwestern Episcopalian, publication of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

90249

U.N. ROLE CRUCIAL TO SOLUTION OF GULF CRISIS, JERUSALEM CHURCH LEADERS TELL BISHOPS

by Steve Weston

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 20--Turmoil stemming from the Persian Gulf crisis and the prospect of increased unrest within Israel and the Arab world brought animated response from two officials of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem who presented their views before the House of Bishops.

Bishop Samir Kafity, president-bishop of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, and the Rev. Canon Naim Ateek, canon of St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem and pastor of its Arabic-speaking congregation, assessed the continuing multi-lateral military buildup and its destabilizing effects on Israel's relationships with its Arab neighbors. Both emphasized that the series of crises in the Arab world are not separate incidents in the struggle for autonomy in the Middle East.

"We do not see the crises disconnected from one another," Kafity asserted in an address before the House of Bishops. "We are still living the post-World-War-II resolution of a situation over which we have no control. Faith continues to be exploited and abused for divisive reasons."

Kafity said the current Persian Gulf crisis impinges on inter-Arab relationships. "Claims and boundaries are not certain for all the region. The crisis existed before, during, and after the invasion of Kuwait."

"The resolution of the [Persian] Gulf crisis lies with the United Nations," Kafity said. "We want the UN to solve all aspects of the crisis at the same time. We can't prioritize solutions when there is death to children, to parents, to nations. The task is not to condemn or polarize but to use the situation for a better Middle East and a better world."

In an August 21 message to Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning, Bishop Kafity acknowledged a new destabilization of the region in which Israelis, Palestinians, and Muslims have constantly faced an uncertain and often hostile future. "Action in this crisis should not be prompted by the price of oil and self-interest," Bishop Kafity said, "but by the sacred value of human rights and human life."

The crisis is exacerbated by heightening tensions, Kafity continued. "We call on all nations to respect the charter and decisions of the United Nations, including its many decisions on Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus, and the Middle East in general."

Browning responded to Kafity's concern in late August by calling upon President George Bush "to remain within the mandate of the United Nations as that body seeks to resolve the crisis." He urged the U.S. government to be open to "every opportunity for a negotiated and peaceful solution" and suggested that national pride should not "obstruct the possibility of negotiation."

Dialogue among Israeli and Arab interests in the Middle East remains tenuous at best, said Ateek, and the claims of Jews, Palestinians, and Muslims to a geographical homeland with Jerusalem as its center have intensified. One million Palestinians who once lived in present-day Israel now claim Israeli citizenship; 1.3 million Palestinians live in what is referred to as Eastern Palestine, on the West Bank of the Jordan River; and there are more than a million Palestinians living in Lebanese refugee camps. "The great danger in the Middle East is that people are emigrating, and there is growing religious factionalism," Ateek asserted.

A Palestinian Christian whose family lost everything in the forced eviction from its home near Nazareth when Israel became a nation, Canon Ateek said the presence of such a political state has always provided uncomfortable relationships in the Arab world since 1948. Yet the creation of a new democratic secular state in which Jews, Christians, and Muslims can live together still remains the ideal.

"Peace in the region, justice, and the self-determination of all peoples are critical. We have to be evenhanded. If we say what Iraq has done is wrong by annexing Kuwait, what Israel has done in occupying the West Bank, Golan Heights, part of Lebanon, and the annexation of East Jerusalem is

wrong," Ateek said.

Arab countries share a similar problem that Ateek said he believes is bound up in the quest for rights to sovereign territory. After World War I, the area under Turkish domination anticipated its autonomy, promised by the Allies. "Independence was denied Palestine," the canon said, "because Britain promised to create a Jewish homeland there." Disunity within the Arab countries, intensified by the Persian Gulf crisis, tugs at the sleeve of the Palestinians.

"We know that a secure Israel will live within its secure borders," Ateek added. "Israel must also live as part of the Middle East. The task is to see how it can relate not as an enemy but as a good neighbor."

--Steve Weston is canon for communication and program for the Diocese of Dallas.

90250

EPISCOPALIANS HEADED TO PHOENIX EVEN THOUGH KING HOLIDAY STILL IN LIMBO

by Nan Ross

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 20--With or without a Martin Luther King holiday, Arizona is and should be the site for the Episcopal Church's next General Convention, asserted one of the church's black bishops.

Herbert Thompson, bishop coadjutor of the Diocese of Southern Ohio, said, "No matter what happens...we should go anyway; we have a ministry to exercise and a witness to bear."

Thompson is one of many church leaders who have struggled with Arizona's on-again, off-again King Day--in limbo once more until a public referendum in November.

For Thompson, the precedent for how to respond to Arizona has been set in South Africa, "where we have looked to Bishop Desmond Tutu for direction. In Arizona, we should take our cues from [Bishop Joseph T.] Joe Heistand, who has been fighting for this holiday for a long time. We owe our support to him."

While meeting with the Episcopal House of Bishops in Washington, D.C., September 13-20, Heistand reassured his colleagues that in a recent polling 58 percent of Arizonans approve the holiday.

Heistand added, "Because Evan Mecham was so soundly defeated in a primary election last week, we have another indication that the state wants to be finished with the King Day issue and move on." Mecham, who was impeached and removed from the governor's office in 1989, lost in his sixth

try for the post September 11.

Heistand and other Arizona civic leaders have assured the church that the matter would be settled before the convention is convened in Phoenix next July. The event will draw more than 10,000 Episcopalians for nearly two weeks of church business and is considered a plum for the state's economy, which has suffered from convention boycotts over the King Day issue.

Heistand serves on a committee of local business and religious leaders that is directing still another campaign to educate voters and encourage them to go to the polls.

Thompson said that he believes actions such as Heistand's are signs that the Episcopal Church "has been on the right side of the King Day issue. We've been very, very clear on where we stand as a church. There may be some people who think we shouldn't go to Phoenix (without a holiday secured). But I believe that as a church, like Bishop Tutu has [done] in South Africa, we have to set a precedent of staying in there to witness to what we believe in."

Bishop Orris "Jay" Walker of Long Island (New York) is another black bishop who linked the King Day issue to South Africa. "It is to our credit that our church has been forthright in our support for issues like this in our country as well as in South Africa and in the Middle East. I see a common thread in all of this that we can work through this."

Co-hosting the convention with the Diocese of Arizona are Episcopalians from the Navajoland Area Mission. "I hope the King Day issue will pass in November," said Navajo Bishop Steven Plummer. "A lot of Navajo people think Martin Luther King stood for them, too. His dream and the Navajos' dream is the same."

In the final moments of the House of Bishops meeting, Heistand extended to the bishops and their spouses a "very warm welcome to Phoenix next July." He told the group that last June when the thermometer reached an all-time high of 122 degrees he received calls from four anxious bishops, all asking, "What was it like?"

"Hot," Heistand told them. "When they asked me what it would be like next July, I told them: 'Hot.'" Heistand said Phoenix is the nation's eighth largest city, and 2.5 million people go to work there every day. "We have air conditioning that really works."

--Nan Ross is director of communications for the Diocese of Arizona.

90251

EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND RUSSIAN ORTHODOX OPEN NEW DIALOGUE

At the invitation of Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning, a joint coordinating committee on cooperation between the Episcopal Church and the Russian Orthodox Church met September 12-13 in New York. The idea was launched as a result of a conversation with the Russian patriarch during Browning's visit to Russia last year.

The new committee will seek cooperation in some practical areas, including the exchange of church delegations, students, and teachers, plus information in areas of theology, spirituality, Christian education, peace and justice, ecumenism, and ecology.

"Our task is to monitor the relationship and make suggestions on how we can enhance it," said Bishop Roger White of Milwaukee, a member of the committee. He said the meeting was "exceedingly positive" and "very congenial." Previous attempts at a conversation were disrupted when the Episcopal Church began to ordain women, but, White said, "There is now a total change of climate." The church in the Soviet Union is entering "a very exciting time--but with overwhelming problems," he added. As a result, it is reaching out in new ways to the international ecumenical community.

One practical symbol is the pending appointment of an American Episcopal priest as a Volunteer in Mission. He will serve as an alcohol abuse counselor in Moscow with the government's ministry of health. The appointment is dependent on an official invitation by the Russian Orthodox Church, following verbal approval at this meeting.

Other Episcopal members of the committee are the Rev. J. Robert Wright of General Theological Seminary and Suzanne Massie, fellow of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University.

Heading the Russian delegation was the Most. Rev. Vladimir, bishop of Tashkent and Central Asia and vice chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. He was accompanied by the Very Rev. Alexander Golubov, pastor of Three Saints Russian Orthodox Church in Garfield, New Jersey, and Valery Chukalov, a staff member of the Moscow Patriarchate. Also participating were the Rev. William Norgren, ecumenical officer for the Episcopal Church, and Dr. Chris Agnew, associate ecumenical officer.



news briefs

90252

Prayer Book Society barred from National Cathedral

The traditionalist Prayer Book Society (PBS) has been barred from using the National Cathedral in Washington because of the society's adherence to the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, a cathedral spokeswoman confirmed on September 4. The Rev. Jerome Politzer, president of the Louisville, Kentucky-based PBS, said he found the action particularly offensive, given the interfaith nature of the National Cathedral. He added that the cathedral's policy represented one more instance of the exclusion of traditionalists from their "rightful role and place in the life of the church." Referring to the ban, Politzer said: "The leadership of the church trumpets the virtue of compassion and openness whenever it furthers its liberal agenda: gay rights, inclusive language, liberation theology, and all. But...when the issue is contrary to that agenda, they are brutal, repressive, and without any sign of compassion whatsoever." Jean Grigsby, speaking for the cathedral, said that the policy mandating use of the 1979 Prayer Book was initiated by the late Bishop John Walker, who died in 1989.

NRSV publication date set for September 30

The recently released New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible has already experienced brisk sales prior to its official publication date of September 30, with two of the designated publishers reportedly in their third printing of the translation. The NRSV is the product of a 16-year effort by a team of Bible scholars working under the direction of the Division of Education and Ministry of the National Council of Churches (NCC). It updates the Revised Standard Version, utilizing a number of previously unavailable ancient manuscripts, most notably the Dead Sea Scrolls. The new version may also herald a further chapter in ecumenical trends, according to the Rev. Arthur Van Eck, associate general secretary of the NCC's Division of Education and Ministry. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops will consider endorsing the NRSV at its November 12-15 meeting in Washington. Approval of the translation by the Roman Catholic bishops could lead to the publication of a "common Bible" for Protestants, Orthodox, and Roman Catholics, Dr. Van Eck said.

Petition urges continuing lesbian/gay ordinations

The Task Force for Continuing Lesbian/Gay Ordination has presented Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning with a petition signed by 910 Episcopalians who said they had either joined in or would join in such ordinations. The petition, presented to Browning during the September House of Bishops meeting, was said to illustrate that last December's ordination of an openly gay man in Hoboken, New Jersey, was not an isolated event. The petition's signatories were evenly divided between homosexuals and heterosexuals, with 45 percent of the total indicating that they had attended the ordination of an openly lesbian or gay person. The task force is composed of members of Integrity, the Episcopal Women's Caucus, and the Episcopal Urban Caucus.

NCC calls for Iraqi withdrawal and U.S. restraint

In a wide-ranging statement on the Persian Gulf crisis, the Executive Coordinating Committee of the National Council of Churches (NCC) has called for a complete withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, while expressing deep concern about "the growing magnitude of the U.S. military presence and the apparent open-ended nature of the U.S. involvement in the region." The September 14 statement contrasted the recent "prompt and massive response on the part of the United States" with its "negligence" regarding earlier United Nations resolutions calling for Israel's withdrawal from occupied Palestinian lands. In addition, the NCC condemned Iraq's detention of civilians and stated its support for economic sanctions against Iraq, excepting essential food and medicine to civilians. The Executive Coordinating Committee speaks and acts on behalf of the NCC's General Board between the board's annual sessions.

Church of Uganda approves women's ordination

The Anglican Church of Uganda approved the ordination of women priests at its House of Bishops meeting in August. As in other churches of the Anglican Communion, the East African church has long been divided over the issue. Prior to the August decision, at least six women priests had been ordained by Ugandan bishops acting unilaterally. Women have served as deacons in the Church of Uganda for many years.

Tutu and Chikane allegedly slated for assassination

Desmond Tutu, archbishop of Cape Town, and South African Council of Churches (SACC) General Secretary Frank Chikane were allegedly targeted for assassination by a covert military agency during the presidency of P.W. Botha, according to a SACC statement issued on September 6. In testimony before an official government committee investigating the army's possible sponsorship of "death squads," witnesses said they were approached by members of the army's covert Civil Cooperation Bureau and offered money to carry out the assassinations, the SACC reported. The Civil

Cooperation Bureau was apparently formed to infiltrate anti-apartheid and black nationalist groups. South African President F.W. de Klerk has said that the existence of the secret organization wasn't made known to him until January of this year. The government's investigative panel, known as the Harms Commission, is continuing its hearings.

Dissident Southern Baptists form news service

An alliance of Southern Baptist journalists, responding to the militantly conservative drift of the Southern Baptist Convention, has formed the Associated Baptist Press (ABP) to serve as an alternative to the denomination's official news service, the Baptist Press (BP). Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, September 11-12, the new agency's directors said that "the ABP will be guided by journalistic standards common to the profession and by Christian ethics in reportage and fairness.... ABP will not be a 'press agent' of any political group, secular or Baptist." The former director and news editor of the BP were fired by the 14.9-million-member denomination's conservative-leaning executive committee in July for unspecified reasons. Charles Overby, president of the Gannett Foundation, was elected to chair the ABP's board.

Kenyan church urges government to release report

The Anglican Church in Kenya is pressing the government of President Daniel arap Moi to make public the findings of a British investigation into the murder of the Kenyan foreign minister in February. The air of secrecy surrounding the death of Robert Ouko has fueled speculation that the Moi government was involved in the slaying. The Church of the Province of Kenya, in underscoring its drive for political reform, said in a September 14 statement, "Failure to publish the Ouko report would be the very cover-up Kenyans have been told there will not be." The present crisis of confidence in the Moi government comes amid continuing widespread demands for the reinstitution of a multiparty system in Kenya.

PB's Fund for World Relief aids Gulf refugees

As part of its continuing efforts to ease the plight of refugees pouring into Jordan from Iraq and Kuwait, the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief has forwarded \$5,000 to Church World Service and an additional \$10,000 directly to the assistant bishop of Jerusalem, who is located in Amman, Jordan. Church World Service, the relief agency of the National Council of Churches, has assumed responsibility for 25 percent of the \$300,000 global appeal made by the World Council of Churches for emergency aid. Kenlynn Schroeder, disaster director for Church World Service, said that food, shelter, medical care, and water "are especially crucial because of the extremely hot and dry desert conditions and the harrowing trip that most of these people have had to endure."

New United Kingdom ecumenical structure inaugurated

The Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CCBI), the ecumenical structure that succeeds the British Council of Churches (BCC), was inaugurated in Liverpool on September 8, and drew immediate protests from fundamentalists opposing the full inclusion of the Roman Catholic Church in the new body. The CCBI, in contrast to the earlier arrangement, will have neither inherent powers nor an agenda of its own, but will instead aim at deepening ecumenical ties among its member denominations. Sketching the difference, Canon John Reardon of the United Reformed Church, who is general secretary of the CCBI, said, "[Previously,] the churches had an agenda; the BCC had an agenda. Sometimes they were common agendas, but not always. The CCBI will not undertake an agenda of its own. It will have an agenda that the churches give to it." An integral part of the CCBI's work will be offering help to the new national ecumenical bodies in the United Kingdom, such as Churches Together in England, which were inaugurated on September 1. Ireland's largest Protestant denomination, the Presbyterian Church, has refused to join the CCBI, arguing that the Roman Catholic Church will seek domination of the decentralized organization.

Episcopal Radio-TV Foundation goes Chapter 11

The Episcopal Radio-TV Foundation, facing a \$1.8-million debt as a result of an unfavorable legal verdict, has filed for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the federal bankruptcy law. The foundation, a nonprofit organization with no official ties to the Episcopal Church, was found in breach of contract for commercially distributing Bible tapes that had been recorded by the late Alexander Scourby in 1972. The Rev. Louis Schueddig, director of the foundation, explained that Scourby had been paid \$15,000 for his work on the recordings, but "the problem was we did not have a written contract ... so we were left vulnerable" after Scourby's death in 1985. Schueddig said that the decision in favor of the Scourby estate "in no way changes our mission or the zeal and commitment we have for [the Episcopal Radio-TV Foundation's] future."

Terry Waite said to be alive

"I know Terry Waite is alive; I know he has been ill," said Brian Keenan, the Irish teacher who was released by his Lebanese captors in August. Claiming that he and Terry Waite had been held captive in the same apartment, Keenan told a British television audience on September 10 that he had heard Waite but not seen him. Waite was serving as an envoy for Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie at the time of his disappearance in Beirut in January 1987. Dr. Runcie, commenting on the Keenan disclosure in the light of months of rumors regarding Waite's death, said, "What Brian Keenan had to say about Terry Waite was clear confirmation of our constant belief that he is alive." The archbishop, referring to the pivotal role Iran might play in freeing the hostages, also expressed his confidence that the

British government is "pursuing every potential channel" in securing their release. During the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, 15 Shiite Muslim prisoners--whose fate has been tied to that of the hostages--were reportedly freed and are now said to be in the hands of Iranian authorities. On September 18, the Iranian ambassador to Pakistan hinted at the imminent release of some of the hostages.

Encounter for Women and Men is rescheduled

The Anglican Encounter for Women and Men, to be held in Salvador, Brazil, has been rescheduled for March 29-April 4, 1992. The event's planning committee made the move to avoid conflict with the Brazilian Carnival, which continues into the second week of March, the original date of the gathering. Organized around the theme of "Celebration of Life for a Kingdom of Justice and Peace," the program will bring together women and men from the Americas to discuss issues of direct concern to women. Over 2,000 people are expected to attend the conference, with ecumenical organizations and other Anglican dioceses also represented.

Virginia's first Anglican bishop honored in London

Nearly 100 Episcopalians from the Diocese of Virginia recently journeyed to London to commemorate the bicentennial of the consecration of Virginia's first Anglican bishop. Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie was the chief celebrant for the Festival Eucharist, held in Lambeth Palace's chapel, which had been the site of the consecration of the Rt. Rev. James Madison, a cousin of President Madison, on September 19, 1790. The Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee, bishop of Virginia, assisted Runcie during the September 10 service, and Henry Catto, U.S. ambassador to Great Britain, attended as a special guest. The Virginia delegation included a representative mix of laity and clergy.

Assemblies of God affirms public ministry of women

A position paper recently issued by the executive governing board of the Assemblies of God has said that Scripture offers no "convincing evidence that the ministry of women is restricted according to some sacred or immutable principle." The paper, titled "Role of Women in Ministry," stated that the Assemblies of God "has been blessed and must continue to be blessed by the ministry of God's gifted and commissioned daughters." The board convened during the 2.1-million-member denomination's annual meeting, held this year in Springfield, Missouri.

Roman Catholic bishops delay decision on women

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops has postponed its November vote on a pastoral letter dealing with abortion, contraception, ordination, and other issues of concern to women. At the urging of the Vatican, the U.S. bishops will now solicit feedback on the letter from bishops

conferences in other countries. The seven-year effort, titled "One in Christ Jesus," has drawn sustained criticism from large numbers of Roman Catholic liberals and conservatives who view the document as an unacceptable compromise. Pastoral letters generally establish nonbinding guidelines.

Religious displays on public property widely challenged

Variations on the church-state issue were recently taken up by courts in California, Illinois, and New York. A district court judge in Fresno, California, ruled that the presence of a 75-foot-high cross in a public cemetery violated the Constitution because it created "a political division along religious lines." Christian symbolism on public property "sends a message that says unless you adhere to what [the cross] represents, you're an outsider," said Carol Sobel, the American Civil Liberties Union attorney who argued on behalf of a Jewish family. In Syracuse, New York, a federal judge ordered the removal of a crucifixion painting from the wall of a public school auditorium on the grounds that it conveys "a message of government endorsement of Christianity." And a Chicago federal appeals court heard oral arguments concerning the constitutionality of a private group's religious display in a public park. Until last year, the Jaycees had shown paintings honoring Christ during the Christmas season in Chicago's Washington Park. Attorney Joel Chefitz, arguing for the Jaycees, said, "We are hopeful that the court of appeals will vindicate the principle that freedom of speech includes the freedom to declare one's religious beliefs publicly."

Pope consecrates Ivory Coast basilica amid controversy

Pope John Paul II consecrated the world's largest Christian church in the Ivory Coast on September 10. The Basilica of Our Lady of Peace is located in Yamoussoukro, the birthplace of President Felix Houphouët-Boigny, who purportedly built the church at his own expense. Valued at a minimum of \$140 million, the basilica is 73 feet higher than the top of the cross on St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and can accommodate 18,000 people. The project, a gift to the Holy See, has been widely criticized because the Ivory Coast is plagued by poverty and Roman Catholics constitute only 15 percent of the nation's population.

Mainline Protestant membership decline continues

U.S. mainline Protestant denominations saw a further membership decline in 1988, continuing a trend that began in the mid-1960s, according to the 1990 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*. In contrast, a number of conservative Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church showed gains in membership in the United States, though both the gains and losses tended to be small, hovering around 1 percent. Episcopal Church membership was down by .28 percent, to 2,455,422 in 1988, the most recent year data were made available to the yearbook. The publication, prepared by the National Council of Churches' Education, Communication, and Discipleship Unit and published by Abingdon Press in Nashville, is the

only comprehensive annual source for statistics and general information pertaining to denominations in the United States and Canada. The 307-page 1990 edition contains data on 219 U.S. religious bodies.

Gathering weighs impact of religion on environment

Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and American Indian theologians recently came together during a four-day conference to discuss the relationship between religion and the environment, and to challenge each other to a deeper reverence for the earth. Pollution, deforestation, the imperiled ozone layer, and overpopulation were among the issues tackled at the mid-September gathering at Middlebury College in Vermont. Taking up the theme of the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and political leader of Tibetan Buddhists, who admonished that "to take care of the planet is to take care of our own house," Sallie McFague, a Christian theologian, offered a self-critical observation. "Christians have been brainwashed to think they belong somewhere else, namely, heaven," she said; as a consequence, Christianity focuses on human beings "to the almost total neglect of other species."

Two more Jesuits come under attack in El Salvador

Two Jesuit priests have reported that they recently came under gunfire from the Salvadoran military shortly after returning to their parish in rural El Salvador. Senator John Kerry (D-MA), speaking at a September 11 news conference in Washington, characterized the attack as a further instance of the U.S.-aided Salvadoran military's continuing "war against the church." One of the Jesuits involved in the incident, the Rev. Jon Cortina, was a friend and colleague of the six Jesuits who were allegedly murdered by Salvadoran soldiers last November. No one has yet been brought to trial for the November killings, and Kerry charged that there is "overwhelming evidence of cover-up" by the Salvadoran government.

Correction: Misidentification hits Central New York

Anita Monsees was misidentified as the "director of public information for the Diocese of Western New York" in the September 7 ENS story on the Syracuse event commemorating David Pendleton Oakerhater as the Episcopal Church's first American Indian deacon. Monsees is the director of public information for the Diocese of Central New York.

An invitation to Episcopal communicators

As preparations for General Convention in Phoenix begin, the Office of Communication is accepting applications from communicators who want to work in the news room or on the daily newspaper. Please send a letter expressing your interest, including a writing sample, and indicate a preference for news room or newspaper. Also indicate any special skills (i.e. computer skills, photography, layout, etc.) Send application to Jim Solheim, Episcopal News Service, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017.



news features

90253

NEWS ANALYSIS

TRADITIONALIST BISHOPS PERCEIVE CHANGE IN BISHOPS' WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN

by Michael Barwell

A year after traditionalist bishops fought for the right to be heard, they left this House of Bishops meeting with confidence that they now are heard and are "part of the family."

Their presence at this meeting, September 14-20, was noticeably low-key and less strident than in previous meetings.

"There is nothing to be gained by a high profile," said Clarence Pope, bishop of Fort Worth and president of the Episcopal Synod of America (ESA). "We are clearly identified."

It was only a year ago in Philadelphia that the bishops affiliated with the then-new ESA sought affirmation that they are a valid voice in the Episcopal Church. Although that meeting crackled with tensions as bishops jockeyed for position, it ended in what Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning called a "euphoria" of reconciliation, in which the bishops pledged to work out their differences pastorally with each other. Bishop Pope and Bishop David Johnson of Massachusetts, representing the broad spectrum of the church, even embraced on the platform in Philadelphia in a display of collegial affection.

That euphoria seemed short-lived. At an April meeting in Denver, the ESA's leaders called for creation of a nongeographic 10th province to allow them to care for what they claim is "a third of the church" troubled by perceived liberal trends in theology and practice.

Both Pope and Bishop William Wantland of Eau Claire (Wisconsin), another ESA leader of a traditionalist diocese, emphatically stated that their intentions in seeking a separate province were misunderstood after the Denver meeting. They said that, despite what may have been perceived as shrill rhetoric, the suggestion for another province was not a demand. Rather, it was an overture for exploration of how to best

accommodate their desire to operate within the church. Pope and Wantland also said the Denver resolution was in response to suggestions made during ongoing meetings with the presiding bishop's Council of Advice.

Any discussion of a 10th province--aside from private conversations at this meeting--was almost taboo. "It was very deliberate not to raise the issue," said Pope. "That may well not be necessary" if pastoral work within the House of Bishops continues.

"There is movement for reconciliation and healing," Pope said in an interview. He also confided that the ESA bishops met privately with the presiding bishop about several issues. Although he would not divulge any contents of the meeting, Pope did say that the "end result will allow people in the Episcopal Church" to be open to the "propagation and nurturing" the ESA may offer.

Browning indicated a similar assessment in the closing press conference, saying he "remains convinced the ESA bishops represent a clear conviction" they can be part of the life of this church. "We need to hear them and respond," Browning said. "They are not talking as much about a 10th province. They may be backing away. The dialogue is still open."

Wantland sponsors resolution on Newark ordination

Not all of the ESA's presence was sweetness and light here. Wantland introduced the resolution calling for the House of Bishops to affirm the February 20 statement in which the presiding bishop and his Council of Advice disassociated themselves from Bishop John Spong's ordination of a homosexual priest last year.

Although the action was the mildest form of reprimand available to the bishops, the issue nevertheless embroiled the bishops in a long and at times a heated exchange.

The closeness of the vote was a clear indication that the bishops were not of one mind on the issues of sexuality, ordination of homosexuals, or reprimanding other bishops for decisions based on individual conscience. If the ESA bishops were seeking a definitive answer on the issue of ordaining homosexuals, they were disappointed. As one bishop quipped afterwards, nobody got a pound of flesh to take home, but many had a few ounces.

Pope also admitted that he was "somewhat puzzled" by the bishops' pastoral statement on sexuality. "There is an implication of openness" to accepting homosexual practices, he said, which is not acceptable, "although it is somewhat conciliatory." If, however, the bishops' statement "is an attempt to say we need to continue debating until some conclusion is reached, I'm in favor of that."

Sexuality may be dominant issue at Phoenix

The issue of sexuality may well come to the boil at General Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, next July, Pope and Wantland said.

"Sexuality will be the big issue" at this General Convention, Wantland predicted.

"When we move into issues of sexual practice, not sexuality, the

Scriptures are fairly clear," Wantland said. "We're not talking about a civil rights issue here. That is a common mistake. I have always championed minority rights, sometimes at great personal cost," Wantland added. "Persons with a different sexual orientation should not be denied housing, or jobs, for example." But that "does not mean that that behavior is consonant with the Christian"--or that homosexuals should be guaranteed ordination as priests in the church.

And, Wantland said, the ESA, Episcopalians United for Revelation, Renewal and Reformation, and the Prayer Book Society are amassing a sizeable war chest to counter an anticipated expensive campaign by gay rights activists to promote adoption of canons that would allow homosexuals the right to ordination.

The decisions on ordaining homosexuals "may well be the closest thing to a make-or-break issue for the church--far more than any other issue that has come up," Wantland said in an interview. "Even more than the issue of women's ordination," he added.

Overall, the ESA bishops seem pleased with their influence during this bishops' meeting. They pointed to the close roll-call vote on the Spong resolution, among other things, as a sign that a more conservative or moderate tone will prevail in years to come. They also acknowledge that the ESA movement is not unified in its approach to these issues.

"Many of our constituencies would like to break and run," Pope acknowledged. In an earlier interview he admitted that he was severely criticized by some traditionalists for "selling out" the cause in Philadelphia. But, he said, the ESA bishops don't want a breakaway church that would be "one more splinter church that would go nowhere."

"There is a slight turn in the right direction and it may accelerate," Pope said. While there is no empirical evidence to show that bishops are becoming more conservative, Pope observed that it appears newer bishops are more inclined to be keen on conservative interpretations of evangelism, the authority of Scripture, and theological issues.

If that perception is correct, then some of the issues the ESA bishops have fought for during recent years may become a reality.

When the ESA was founded in Fort Worth in 1989, the bishops said they were "not threatening to leave; they were threatening to stay" to reform the Episcopal Church.

As this House of Bishops meeting ended, Pope summed up his preceptions by saying, "The ESA is a strong organization. Let's tone down the rhetoric. We intend to stay and become the leaven."

90254

FAITHFUL WITNESS IN PUBLIC LIFE

The Most Rev. Edmond Lee Browning
Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church
The Annual Meeting of the House of Bishops
Washington, D.C.
September 18, 1990

"Where there is no vision, the people perish...."
Proverbs 29:18a

This past week a great celebration was held. It was a celebration almost covered over by the events in the Persian Gulf. It was the reopening of Ellis Island--the gateway through which over 12 million immigrants entered the United States. Forty percent of all Americans can look back to an ancestor who passed through Ellis Island to a new life.

The celebration at Ellis Island helped me connect with the vision that brought so many millions of people to America. And, as other dire news from the Arabian Peninsula, from the subways of New York City, from the execution chairs of so many of our state prisons, from the gloomy statistics of our educational system, I asked myself what vision brought the tired, the homeless, the oppressed to these shores. I quickly moved from this thought to a wonderment: Have we lost the vision? Have we lost the vision of a land that offers new life?

There are many who say that millions of people came to America because "the streets were paved with gold." The cynics will try to tell us that pursuit of money and wealth was what built the United States. I do not stand in that camp. This country was built on the vision of justice--by those who came fleeing the shackles of oppression, the claustrophobia of decaying religious practices and structures, the degradation of the body and the soul. They came to find a new, abundant life. Theirs was a true religious pilgrimage. We forget this fact to our own peril and our own frustration.

A vision of freedom and justice

The vision that built this nation, that made it great, that reached out to those seeking a new life, was a moral vision--it was the vision of freedom and justice for all. I want to speak to you today about this moral vision, and more directly, about moral leadership.

This vision of peace and justice was not shared with the native peoples of this country. This vision was never intended for those persons who were brought to this country against their will. The further lack of this vision has caused the exploitation of the environment, of the laborer, of women and children, caused international expansion and colonialism, caused isolation and fear of that which is different. We forget these facts to our peril and frustration, too!

I stood with some trepidation and humility in the pulpit of our

National Cathedral a little over two years ago at the invitation of President Bush to preach on the occasion of his inauguration. In that sermon, I drew from Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address--one of the greatest speeches in our national history. Here was a speech of vision; here was a person exercising moral leadership.

We all know the last paragraph of Lincoln's address: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan--to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace, among ourselves and with all nations."

Here is the clear articulation of a vision. Here is the vision of a nation's moral fiber. Here is moral leadership.

Yes, we all recall this clarion call by one of our nation's greatest presidents. But, do we recall what he said it is that makes this vision, this leadership, possible? Let me read just a part of the long paragraph that precedes the one we know so well.

"...Neither party expected for the war the magnitude, or duration, which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes...."

It is both under the biblical injunction and the words of this great moral leader--judge not lest ye be judged--that I address you on the issue of public policy.

In my sermon at Mr. Bush's inauguration, I was moved to reflect that "moral leadership is grounded in the inner disposition of love and compassion....From this leadership flows healing and unity of purpose. From this leadership emerges national greatness of will and purpose in the exercise of justice and mercy. From this leadership can come the reconciliation of the peoples of the earth. When the moral leader shows his inner disposition of love and compassion through his words and actions, the people recognize, acclaim, and accept its authority. In fact, they hunger for that leadership, and as they are satisfied they are reconciled one to another."

Without a vision, the people perish.

I was reading recently John W. Gardner's new book, *On Leadership*, and I came upon this wisdom: "Leaders must not only have their own commitments; they must move the rest of us toward commitment. They call us to the sacrifices necessary to achieve our goals. They do not ask more than the community can give, but often ask more than it intended to give or thought it possible to give."

Gardner sets the tone for my words on public policy: leaders have not

only their own commitments; they must move the rest of us toward commitment. They must share the vision.

Choices and decisions are moral at the core

I would like to share with you what I have learned from leaders I have met and observed these past five years as presiding bishop, as your emissary.

First, I believe that the great leaders are those who understand that all choices and decisions are *moral* at their core.

Leaders are great not because of the power of money, or the size of the military. Leaders are great because of the moral vision they incarnate. Just as we identify the moral vision of Gandhi, or Martin Luther King, or Nelson Mandela, so, too, we perceive the moral vision of those leaders who understand, communicate, and act on their moral understanding. They understand that the earth's rich, varied, and God-given resources are both finite and must benefit all people. They understand that the invisible economic hand is not the fist of exploitation. They understand that every global problem has its local victim.

Second, great leadership understands the dynamic and reforming power of interaction and interdependence of the various sectors of society.

The effective leader welcomes and encourages the active partnership of the private, public, and nonprofit, voluntary sectors of society. Leadership seeks out the company, counsel, and companionship of the many voices of society.

I have come to value my role as presiding bishop as an active partner with those in the private and public sector. I believe it is my personal calling and a function of my office to be a partner with the president of the United States and those in authority. As an elected leader in the religious sector of our society, I must seek out other leaders in the exercise of collective moral leadership.

On occasion this partnership is one of active support and encouragement. On occasion this partnership has a personal, pastoral nature. On occasion this partnership is one of speaking the hard truth with love--a partnership that is often characterized as "loyal opposition." Whatever the occasion, whatever the issue, whatever the personality of the partner, I seek to exercise that leadership of faithful engagement. And I welcome and honor those who join me in this partnership for the common good--those who hunger and thirst for the shared vision of justice and peace.

Third, I believe that moral leaders are under judgment to be faithful to their witness.

We stand under judgment

The Episcopal Church stands under judgment as a community of faith. The leadership of our church is under divine judgment as servants of the Crucified Lord. We are judged as witnesses of our faith, not of our ideology or our political proclivities. We must always remember *who* we are--not a political party, not a special interest group, not a political action committee--we are a royal priesthood, we are the church of God.

Our pious platitudes, our fuzzy pronouncements and resolutions, our emotional but vacuous pronouncements, our righteous sentiments stand under judgment. Our many words stand judged by that one and holy Word, which is "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword...able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

Finally, I believe that true, moral leadership is prophetic.

Moral leadership gives voice to the quiet whispers of hope. It sings the song of a new land. It cries out of the prisons of darkness. Do I need to remind you, my sister and brother bishops, that the text from Proverbs that stands at the mast of this address is also translated, "Where there is no prophecy, the people cast off restraint...."

Where there is no prophecy, the censor thrives. Where there is no prophecy, the racist reigns. Where there is no prophecy, the thieves of liberty plunder the treasure house of freedom. Where there is no prophecy, the charlatans of purity despoil freedom of choice. Where there is no prophecy, anger and hate turn plowshares into swords.

When I was a young bishop in Europe, I had the honor of meeting Pastor Martin Niemoller, that great Christian witness in the midst of the horror of Nazi Germany. Pastor Niemoller's words from prison are as prophetic today as they were 50 years ago: "First they came for the Jews. I was silent. I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists. I was silent. I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists. I was silent. I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me. There was no one left to speak for me."

Niemoller, Martin Luther King, Havel, Mandela--the list is the solid stone of prophecy. Out of the dictator's bowels, God continually calls forth, liberates, and gives voice to the prophets. What the oppressor is unable to digest is the life-giving Word.

I have learned that all decisions are grounded in moral choices. I have learned of the interdependence of all sectors of society. I have learned about the necessity of being faithful to one's calling. I have learned the power of prophecy. I have learned that moral leadership is grounded in these four marks.

Having put forward these learnings about leadership, let me share with you my moral vision. Let me share with you the dream that helps me to seek wholeness and integration to all that I say and try to do. My vision is both global and local: THE MANY ARE ONE.

Called out of isolation into community

THE MANY ARE ONE. It is upon this vision that I fix my leadership. My moral vision is the bedrock and guide of my preaching about inclusion and compassion.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish; but the people who keep the law, happy are they."

THE MANY ARE ONE. The basic fact of our time is not independence but interdependence.

Hear the testimony of St. Paul: your bodies are members of Christ (I

Cor. 6:15); you are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof (I Cor. 12:27); you do not belong to yourselves; for you were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your Body (I Cor. 6:19f); there is one body...even as you were called in one hope of your calling (Eph. 4:41); in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, and were all made to drink of one Spirit (I Cor. 12:13); there is one body, and one Spirit (Eph. 4:4); there is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

THE MANY ARE ONE. We are the Body of Christ. This theological vision calls us out of isolation, calls us into community, calls us into relationships. Our vision of being one in Christ makes us whole and forms our spiritual, as well as public, body. Here is grounding of public policy -- the actions, the behavior, the programs, the polity we form and advance.

Look around you. We no longer share the moral vision that encourages contribution to the common good. We divide. We uphold the vision of self-interest and self-service.

It is paradoxical that as we witness the end of the East-West animosity, at the time of the destruction of the Berlin Wall, we are experiencing a rise of factionalism and racism, of ethnic and tribal tension. We find virtue in denominationalism. We find virtue in individualism. We find virtue in elitism. We find value in nationalism.

In this time of the ascendancy of division, we would do well to stand apart and examine carefully our motives, our policy and action in areas of historic intensity, such as the Persian Gulf. What vision do we serve there?

Do we serve the vision of a united world--or do we serve an appetite for oil?

Do we serve the vision of a united world--or do we serve an unbridled Western social, cultural, and political hegemony?

Do we serve the vision of a united world, a world of shared resources--or do we serve the self-interest of a bloated lifestyle?

Do we serve the vision of a united world, a world made great by diversity--or do we serve a world where the light and darkness clash in personal and international affairs, where Satan challenges the messenger of God?

What is the moral principle that guides our actions in the Persian Gulf? In Central America? In the Philippines? In the Third World? In the North-South dialogue?

What is the moral principle that guides our economic system, our trade policy, our national health policy, our national education goals, our environmental policy, our energy policy?

What is the moral principle that guides our attention and care of the elderly, the disabled, the refugee, the homeless, the sexually abused, persons living with AIDS?

What is the moral principle that confronts racism, imperialism, homophobia, sexism?

What is the moral principle, the vision, that animates our public policy?

THE MANY ARE ONE.

Recently, I was listening to an audio tape of Joseph Campbell's *The Power of Myth*. All of a sudden I became aware that Campbell was talking about the earth as "mother." The earth is the mother to humanity. He was explaining how the earth feeds us, nourishes us, suckles us, gives us constant evidence of birth and rebirth. The earth is our mother.

By misunderstanding this relationship with earth as mother, with God's creation, the human species has created separation, domination, oppression, and death. And, of course, our vision of domination has convinced us that we can save and redeem. How shallow is our goal to "save the earth."

The reality is that earth is trying to save us! The earth is trying to feed and nourish us. The earth is trying to fill our lungs with fresh air. The earth is trying to renew us with pure water. The earth is trying to fill our lives with the light and warmth of her sun. The earth is our mother.

The truth is that the earth can, as she once did, exist without us. The message in the face of our arrogance is that she might once more be rid of the dinosaur that cannot adapt to the changing environment. Perhaps our car bumper stickers should read: Save the Humans.

As Joseph Campbell's passionate voice reached out to me, I thought of the Revelation of John--that great passage where from the throne the voice of God reminds us: "Behold, I make all things new."

In 1854, Chief Seattle, the leader of the Suquamish tribe in the land that is now the state of Washington, sent a message to the president of the United States regarding the purchase of tribal land. Chief Seattle wrote these wise and prophetic words:

The Great Chief in Washington sends words that he wishes to buy our land. The great Chief also sends us words of friendship and good will. This is kind of him, since we know he has little need of our friendship in return. But we will consider your offer. For we know that if we do not sell, the white man may come with guns and take our land....

This we know. The earth does not belong to the people; the people belong to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. The people did not weave the web of life; but are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves....

This earth is precious to God, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator. The whites too shall pass; perhaps sooner than all other tribes. Continue to contaminate your bed, you will one night suffocate in your own waste....

...[The red men] love this earth as the newborn loves its mother's

heartbeat. So if we sell you our land, love it as we loved it. Care for it as we've cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you take it. And with all your strength and with all your mind, and with all your heart, preserve it for your children, and love it...as God loves us all.

One thing we know. Our God is the same God. This earth is precious to God. Even the white people cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers and sisters after all. We shall see.

My sisters and brothers, my vision is clear and concise: THE MANY ARE ONE.

We shall see.

90255

HOUSE OF BISHOPS' PASTORAL STATEMENT ON HOMOSEXUALITY ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 20, 1990

We have met in mid-September, 1990, in a climate in which many voices from across the church ask--often insistently--for a definitive word on issues of human sexuality. During our meeting, the presiding bishop led us to consider our particular role as bishops of the church called to be guardians of her faith, unity, and discipline, and leaders of her pastoral life.

We begin by acknowledging that on the issues of human sexuality, wide diversity and confusion mark our church and most Christian communions, to say nothing of society at large. Two issues in particular rise to the surface--the affirmation of those living in faithful same-sex relationships and the ordination to Holy Orders of avowed and sexually active homosexual men and women.

We are not of a single mind in our understanding of the demands of Holy Scripture, of faithful obedience to tradition, or informed awareness of the actual lives and choices faced by homosexual men and women. Yet, our discussion of this vexing issue was characterized by mutual respect and a common search for the truth.

The 1988 General Convention called the church to a disciplined dialogue, the creation of occasions to discuss human sexuality, in the context of which there would inescapably be a focus on homosexuality. Those discussions began, and they must continue. As your bishops, we reaffirm our commitment to stimulate prolonged opportunities for such dialogue, in which members of this church, both heterosexual and homosexual, may study, pray,

listen to, and share "our convictions and concerns, our search for stable, loving, and committed relationships, and our journey toward wholeness and holiness." To call for dialogue in a puzzling and complex area is not to abdicate our leadership--it is precisely to give it in a way consistent with our Anglican heritage: to call God's people to stand faithfully in the midst of life, seeking the mind and heart of God.

Obviously, we do not expect easy answers. Dialogue is not going to produce consensus. It may not even provide grounds for a compromise presently beyond our ken. But our prayerful hope is that it will provide greater understanding of the mind of Christ.

We have been called to recognize that, no matter how deeply each of us may feel about homosexuality, there are other people of good faith who also take seriously the authority of Scripture and may conclude differently. We have been called to recognize that we cannot carry out our ministry if we each simply assume that we already have the whole truth and nothing at all to learn. We call on you to share our recognition of the inherent faithlessness of a closed mind, one that blocks God from illuminating old truths in a fresh way, from calling us to new understandings or from leading us into new ways of thinking.

As thorny as questions raised in dialogue about human sexuality may be, as bewildering as it may be to encounter believing Christians in often sharp disagreement, faith does offer answers. It offers a journey together as we look at those questions. It offers an understanding of moral discourse and the need for theological reflection in our lives. It calls us to repentance, prayer, and discernment. If we model what it is to live in the tension of disagreement with all its ambiguity, to listen to one another, to be respectful to one another, to pray for one another, then we will have placed our brokenness in the hands of God where it belongs. We will have tested our experience against the traditions of Scripture, and we will have made a real contribution. So our presiding bishop said to us, and so we say to you.

We urge each of you to pray for the strength and will to enter into this dialogue. It will be tempting to many to shun discussion of something as intimate, as potentially uncomfortable, or even as possibly disturbing as human sexuality. If you believe that you have a firm position, you may not welcome challenge, the risk that deeply held convictions must be reexamined. For *God's* sake, accept the challenge and be open to risk. Unlike most other issues with which the church has wrestled within easy memory, this one is crowded and clouded with stereotypes and preconceptions. Many if not all of these must be examined before those in prayerful dialogue can proceed to such accepted sources of authority for Christians as Scripture, tradition, and reason.

If you take part in this dialogue to which we call you, if you agree to probe for the answers that our faith has to offer, we urge you to pray for the will to nurture and practice the art of listening. In perhaps no other area of human discourse is it so important that you listen to what others are actually saying. Do not fall victim to the common error of "hearing" what you think people are likely to say. Let your ears be open to concerns and convictions

being shared in fresh ways by people who may be experiencing pain in personal struggles. Do not let your senses warp someone else's expression of a faithful approach to human sexuality because it does not match your own. No one needs to change his or her mind to listen with respect, courtesy, and, yes, love.

We urge you to pray for patience. This may be especially difficult for those who expect early resolution, an up-or-down vote at the forthcoming General Convention. All of us have learned to tolerate ambiguity in our adult lives, after we "graduated" from an age of instant gratification (or denial) and clear-cut if not always welcome rules. So, we believe, will it be in these matters for some time to come.

We recognize that it would not be faithful to the Gospel to ignore the anguished cries of homosexual men and women who feel hurt, rejected, and angry by what they see about them. At the same time, we recognize that it would not be faithful to the Gospel to ignore or simply label as homophobic the anguished cries of men and women who feel hurt, rejected, and angry that what they see as sin is not being reaffirmed as such. In acknowledging the pain and sense of powerlessness of both groups in the face of a delay in the time for decision, we acknowledge the extent to which the whole church groans in travail, waiting for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

But hear us carefully. We find it unacceptable to wait passively for that guidance. We must pray for it and work very hard to be prepared to comprehend it. The dialogue to which we again call you offers, we believe, the most faithful process for our community of believers to discern God's will.

90256

HOUSE OF BISHOPS PASTORAL STATEMENT ON EVANGELISM ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 20, 1990

"Evangelism is the presentation of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, in such ways that persons may be led to believe in him as Savior and follow him as Lord in the fellowship of the church."

(William Temple, archbishop of Canterbury)

The meeting of the House of Bishops on the eve of the Decade of Evangelism has taken place in the city of Washington. In these surroundings we have become aware of the relationships within and the forces without through which God is continuing to transform us into an evangelizing body. We have heard from one another our various stories of spiritual journey. We have engaged one another in our common faith and our strongly felt differences. We have renewed our ordination vows in the completed

National Cathedral. We have been challenged by leaders and thinkers from within and without our body. We have heard from leaders of Congress and have spoken to them.

In all this we have discerned the action of God in us, which is the energizing power of an evangelizing church. We call upon our dioceses, congregations, clergy, and people to be open today to the transforming Lord in order that we be empowered for this Decade of Evangelism.

We believe that we will grow as an effective instrument of evangelism as we respond to the continuing challenge of our baptismal covenant, which calls us to "proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ."

All of us are called into a life of evangelism, to fulfill the command to "make disciples of all nations." The driving force in evangelism is the passionate belief that God wills transformation and resurrection for every person. Evangelism is not a method but a message; it is the recognition that salvation as reconciliation and healing is for all, and that reconciliation and healing are found in Jesus Christ.

What allows us to be bold and audacious enough to be an evangelizing church? We believe that when Jesus died on Good Friday the old humanity was crucified with him; and when Christ was raised on Easter morning, God breathed new life into humanity. All creation participates in this mighty, cosmic healing. The church is the community where that cosmic healing is consciously received through repentance and faith. The Spirit of God empowers us to proclaim this good news to everyone.

In the baptismal covenant we are called to "continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers."

A life of prayer in the Body of Christ is foundational in evangelism. This decade seeks to raise awareness rather than set a time for a task completed. It prepares us for evangelism in *every* decade. We call upon all members of this church to devote themselves to prayer, study, fellowship, worship, witness, and proclamation that God through us may heal this broken world.

The baptismal covenant calls us to "seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself."

Our proclamation is always in response to the self-offering of God. Such responding expresses the tenderness with which Jesus comforted and challenged his contemporaries with God's will for humanity.

Evangelism begins with listening. The root meaning of the word *obedience* is: to hear...to listen! Jesus gives us the model in his own struggle to be present and listening to all whom he encountered. This listening will be primary whether sharing the Good News in our neighborhood or in worldwide mission. We commend to the church the necessity of creating a prayerful environment for listening so that persons may be honored and welcomed, affirming diversity of expression and bonding to God in truth.

In the baptismal covenant we are called to "strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being."

During this time together, the presiding bishop has reminded us of our calling as baptized people to act for justice and peace, to reopen for our

society the vision of a new life under the Creator, and to challenge decision makers in the community to center their leadership on moral principle. We ask the church to accept Bishop Browning's challenge, as a necessary element in a vigorous and healthy evangelism. We believe that as events of justice and peace are illuminated by understanding how Christ is present, their value as proclamation is fulfilled.

As we enter this Decade of Evangelism, we realize that our worship, theology, social action, and personal faith must be rooted in faithfulness to the Holy God and commitment to the Body of Christ. We believe that, in Jesus Christ, God calls all people of all cultures saying, "Follow me." So, with prayer in our hearts, the story of Jesus on our lips and our eyes focused on the world, we proclaim the risen Lord with celebration and thanksgiving.

